



# TEACHINGS OF ĪSA UPAŚHAD

IN THE LIGHT OF

MODERN THOUGHT AND LITERATURE

SAIN DAS, M A (Calcutta) B A (Cantab)

( Formerly Principal Dayanand Anglo Vedic College,  
Lahore )

WITH A FOREWORD BY

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DEDICATED

TO

*The revered memory of my only brother*

*LATE LALA LADHA RAM*

*to whose self sacrifice and noble example I owe so much*



## FORWORD

Mr Sain Das, formerly Principal of the D A V college Lahore, is evidently spending his days of retirement in the useful work of writing small books on the classical scriptures of India for the use of educated Indians. His account of 'The Teachings of Isa Upanishad in the Light of Modern Thought and Literature' contains not only his own personal reflections on the truths contained in the Upanishads but also very appropriate quotations which add considerably to the value of the work. While he does not burden his pages with the display of learning, the reader is referred to the chief works from which he can gain farther information and enlightenment. The author's interest is not in the textual or the exegetical side but in the contemporary value of this ancient text. He interprets the scripture with special reference to our present needs and I trust that the book will appeal to all those who are interested in re-thinking the ancient truths in the light of present circumstances.

S RADHA KRISHNAN

Madras University

WALTON

01st October 1933



## PREFACE

In presenting this small book to the public the author claims no originality either in thought or in expression. Nor is this humble attempt calculated to display any depth of learning. The idea is to acquaint the English knowing public with the spiritual experiences of ancient Indian sages.

Ish Upanishad which forms the basis of the talks given here has been translated and commented upon from such a variety of view points and by such a large number of competent authorities that it is simply impossible for a man of limited knowledge and still more limited spiritual insight to make a substantial contribution to the existing literature on the subject. The author feels that though unable to add anything new he may still be able to do some service, however humble, by re-stating and re-thinking the old truths in a way which may be particularly helpful in meeting the spiritual needs of his readers.

Upanishads as a class of literature are admittedly neither treatises on philosophy nor books on dogmatic religion. Yet they have appealed from the earliest times to some of the acutest brains in the world as providing the best solution of the riddle of the Universe. It is not, however the intellectual aspect of the teaching of the Upanishads which the author intends to emphasise. He feels that in this

scientifically and materially-minded age we have perhaps a little too much of the reason already, and badly need some poise to balance our inner selves.

Science has enabled us to explore the universe both in time and space. It has also added very largely to our material resources for leading a comfortable life. It has, however, failed so far, to make us really human. We know a good deal of the physical world we live in we have also gathered enormous knowledge about the starry heaven above and of the beginning and destiny of the earth below, but we are yet ignorant of the meaning, significance and true import of what is going on around us. We know how the Sun in our planetary system is related to the stars revolving around it. We have also learnt the constitution of the ultimate bricks of which this huge structure, which we call the universe, is made up. But about relationship between man and man and that between the constituent parts of his conscious self we are yet hopelessly ignorant. The old formula of natural selection expounded by Darwin in his epoch-making theory of Evolution has been found to work only to a limited extent. It has broken down at a stage at which man has just arrived in its evolutionary process. It was most satisfactory as long as we were ego-centric and had not got beyond the animal part of our nature. But we know now that we are more than animals. We are mental, spiritual, and social beings as well. We do not stand by ourselves

but form parts of a universal whole. A new formula is therefore needed to replace the old one. What this formula is going to be is the problem before the thinking world of to-day. The problem is not new but its importance in the twentieth century has been realized most painfully by the western world in the sad experiences of the last Great War, the after-effects of which have not yet been completely shaken off.

The Indian mind has been working differently for a long time past in certain ways from the western mind. In the West one has to apologise for talking about things divine in India it was considered impossible to think about things human without reference to the ultimate reality. Both find themselves in a difficult situation at the present moment—India rich in its knowledge of the inner self but poor in material resources, the West on the other hand rich materially but groping in the dark to find something which may satisfy the needs of its social and spiritual self. Let us see if one can profit by the experience of the other.

If this book serves in some measure to create interest in the study of the Indian literature with the above object in view it will have fulfilled the purpose for which it is intended.

Before concluding I take this opportunity of acknowledging to the various sources from where the different quotations have been drawn. In this connection I have used material to a very large

extent from the works of SIR RADHA KRISHNAN, to whom I feel greatly indebted not only for imparting this knowledge but also for writing a foreword for this publication. Amongst other sources, I wish gratefully to mention the works of DR. RABINDRA NATH TAGORE, MR. H. G. WELLS, SIR JAMES JEANS, SIR ARTHUR EDDINGTON and several others.

The "Retreat"

SAIN DAS.

11, Temple Road, Lahore,

November 24, 1933.

4In the whole world there is no study so beneficial and elevating as that of the Upanishads. It has been the solace of my life. It will be the solace of my death.

SCHOPPENHAUER

If the words of SCHOPPENHAUER require endorsement I shall willingly give it as the result of my own experience during a long life devoted to the study of many philosophies and many religions.

MAX MULLER



इडाशस्यमिदं सत्यं यत् किञ्च जगत्स्य जगत् ।

तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीया मा गृधा कस्यस्मिन्ननम् ॥ १ ॥

'Thou must know that whatever moves in this moving world is enveloped by God And therefore find thy enjoyment in renunciation never coveting what belongs to others', \*

The first part of this 'MANTRA' asserts the existence of spiritual domain in the universe the second part describes in one word the nature of this universe while the last part gives Man the rule of life based on these conceptions Thus briefly put the ideas implicit in the text though not quite explicitly stated, are —

1 'That the world is 'SAṂSĀR', a perpetual procession of events an incessant flow of occurrences Expressions like 'the wheel of time' "the cycle of birth (PRAVĀH) and death" 'the ever rolling stream' SAṂSĀR", 'PRAVĀH", "JAGAT", are employed to indicate the non substantial or unstable character of the universe Everything that exists suffers change Every actuality is a becoming, has in it the principle of unrest All life is a constant birth or becoming, and all birth entails a constant death a dissolution of that which becomes in order

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*Rabindranath Tagore from the Address in the Chapel of Manchester College, Oxford May 23 1930, quoted in Hibbert Journal, July 1930.)*

that it may change into new becoming Incessant change is true of the infinitely small as of the infinitely great " \*

2 That there exists in this universe of movement an informing spirit which inhabits and governs it and

3 That the visible world of change has its significance only in relation to the changeless Reality that underlies it and

4 That therefore the rule of conduct to be followed by man in his life is to enjoy this universe and all that it contains and not to reject it but to remember that the essential condition of true and free enjoyment of the worldly goods is to renounce them in desire and to dedicate them in spirit to their Lord and Master

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## GOD AND NATURE

While the spiritual experiences of mystics (seekers after the inner illumination) all the world over confirm the theistic conception of life, the judgment of logical reason has not always been uniformly in its favour. On the other hand the pendulum of both the philosophic and scientific thought has been swinging from one position to another since man began to think seriously about this problem. While philosophy, however, has been wavering in its judgment and has not been always dogmatic in its conclusions, the trend of scientific

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\* (*An Idealist view of Life*, P 225, by Radha Krishnan )

thought till very recently has been on the whole materialistic rather than theistic. In the conflict between Science and Christian religion which began in Europe soon after the last half of the fifteenth century the victory of Science was believed to be complete up till the beginning of the present century. The result was that the materialistic outlook in life of the leading men of Science made people generally turn their backs on religion and although Science has now considerably restricted its conclusions regarding the existence of God and most of the scientists of the world now no longer believe in materialism in the sense in which they believed thirty years ago, the average educated man who is not in close touch with the most recent scientific thought is still sceptical about the existence of a spiritual reality. In the words of Rev C. L. Draybridge, M.A. of the Christian Evidence Society, London, "the people still believe that 'The soul is only the sum of activities of the body and that the former ceases to exist when death overtakes the latter'—that everything in the universe is determined by irresistible laws and that man has no freedom of initiative."

Very few of the leading men of science of the present day would however care to maintain this position. On the other hand most of them have been forced to come definitely to the conclusion that it is impossible to explain the universe except in terms of spirit. 'When' says Eddington 'one of the greatest living Astronomers, 'from the human heart the cry goes up, what is it all about?' "It is

no answer to look only at that part of experience which comes to us through certain sensory organs and say it is about atoms and chaos a universe of fiery globes moving to impending doom rather it is about a spirit in which truth has its shrine with potentialities of self-fulfilment in its responses to beauty and right" Similarly Sir James Jeans, one of the leading physicists of the world, expresses himself in the following words on this most important subject. "The Universe", says this renowned scientist, "begins to look more like a great thought than a great machine Mind no longer appears as an accidental intruder into the realm of matter. We are beginning to suspect that we ought rather to hail it as the creator and governor of the realm of matter Not, of course one individual mind but the mind in which the atoms out of which our individual minds have grown, exist as thoughts" \*

"Professor Jeans speaks perhaps", says a well known American preacher, "his noblest word on this phase of the problem when, in a recent letter to the London "Times," he states, that the mathematical formulæ which interest him as a physicist appear suddenly before his eyes as 'a musical score' He sees in these letters and numerals not merely algebraic equations, but the score of a great symphony, the work of a musician And when he sees this score, he sees not merely the "framework of scales and key and tune", but also, behind and

beyond and above, the surging orchestra with its instruments and music. The workings of the universe in other words bring to his ears 'the music of the spheres'. With the modern theory as with the ancient, God is not only a thinker but a poet, a musician, a spirit that conceives in beauty and attains in song " \*

These conclusions are arrived at by two of the great scientists of our day in their search for the ultimate expression of the life of the universe. This, however does not mean that these theistic conceptions about the nature of the universe are confined only to these two of the famous men of science. On the other hand enquiries made in this connection show definitely that by far the greatest majority of the living scientists of the world who have cared to give expression to their views on this subject hold the same opinion. The following statement taken from "Great Thoughts" for November 1931 may be quoted in support of the above assertion —

'With a view to find out what proportion of leading Scientists of to-day was friendly to religion and what proportion was unfriendly the Christian Evidence Society of England wrote to all the Fellows, of the Royal Society numbering about 600 who are unanimously recognised as including the greatest

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\* ( *Is Science vindicating Religion?* by J. H. Holmes, Page 20)

scientists in the British Empire, asking them the following six questions —

- 1 Do you credit the existence of a spiritual domain ?
- 2 Do you consider that man is in some measure responsible for his acts of choice ?
- 3 Is it your opinion that the belief in evolution is compatible with the belief in a Creator ?
- 4 Do you think that Science negatives the idea of a personal God as taught by Jesus Christ ?
- 5 Do you believe that the personalities of men and women exist after the death of their bodies ?
- 6 Do you think that the recent remarkable developments in Scientific thought are favourable to religious belief ?

“The majority sent back the questionnaire but not all of them filled in all the answers To the first question which was really the most important question from our point of view, 60% replied in the affirmative, only 5% in the negative, while 35% gave answers which were neither positive nor negative Some said that as we had not defined our terms ‘ credit ’, ‘ spiritual ’, and ‘ domain ’, they could not answer the question ”

But whether Science confirms the idea of the existence of God or rejects it, the heart of man will never be satisfied with any but the theistic

conceptions of the universe. It was this feeling which made Emerson, the famous American author write the following lines —

‘We grant that human life is mean but how did we find out that it is mean? What is the ground of this uneasiness, of this old discontent? What is the universal sense of want and ignorance but the fine innuendo by which the soul makes its enormous claim?’

Commenting on this Professor Radha Krishnan remarks<sup>1</sup>

“Emerson is here paraphrasing Descartes statement that we should not be conscious of finiteness if we did not have the idea of infinity all the time within us. A sense of spiritual want is a witness to our relation with spirit. What is strange, Dostoevsky wrote in *The Brothers Karamazov* ‘What would be marvellous is not that God should really exist, the marvel is that such an idea the idea of the necessity of God could enter the head of such a savage, vicious beast as man’

The Vedic and Upanishadic idea that the universe is a movement within movement, ‘JAGATIṀ JAGAT (जगतीं जगत्) and that it bears the same relation to the universal soul as our individual bodies bear to our individual souls, finds lucid expression in the following inimitable words of Sir Francis Younghusband<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Idealist view of life*. P. 57

<sup>2</sup> *Hibbert Journal* January 1933

"So the universe would be without beginning and without end rolling on for ever in one Grand Essential Rhythm of an inconceivable complexity of lesser and lesser subsidiary rhythms within rhythms And it would come to culmination after culmination in endless succession—each different from the other and each being a culmination of an infinite number of lesser culminations

And through all, as the ground of all, as the inspiration of all, would abide unchanging and eternal the Holy spirit whose body is the universe we see with our eyes and of whom we are the responsible agents " Again —

"It is a living universe or we could not have been brought forth by it And it is spiritual universe or we would not be animated by spirit The universe is a living universe animated by mind and dominated by the power of the Holy spirit "

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## ENJOYMENT AND RENUNCIATION

There have been, from the earliest times, at least two schools of thought regarding man's outlook on life There are those who believe in enjoying life to the full, and who exclaim constantly with Babar, the great Moghul Emperor of India —

نابر به عیش کوشی که عالم دوناړه ندست

For these people the only object of life is to eat, drink and be merry, and their attitude towards life finds a very clear expression in the following extract from Professor Bateson's Presidential address

delivered in August, 1911 at the meeting of the British Association of Science —

‘Man is just beginning to know himself for what he is—a rather long living animal with great powers of enjoyment if he does not deliberately forego them. Returning to a freer or if you will, simpler conception of life and death, the coming generations are determined to get more of this world than their forefathers did’

At the other extreme stand those men and women for whom material life has not only no charm but who believe it to be a positive source of misery. These views are best summed up in the following words of Mr J H Holmes “We are through with the world. It is indeed all emptiness, and vanity, and deceit. We will leave it therefore as we would leave any other evil thing and we will turn inward to ourselves, and seek within our souls the way that leads to life.”

‘Such a philosophy of despair’, writes Professor Edwin Conklin of Princeton, “is not confined to scientists but is found among all those who see in human life only aimless suffering and evil with no faith in progress and no hope for the future. Even genial and lovable Mark Twain could write —

“A myriad of men are borne, they labour and sweat and struggle for bread, they squabble and scold and fight, they scramble for little mean advantages over each other. Age creeps upon them, infirmities follow, shames and humiliations bring

down their prides and their vanities Those they love are taken from them, and the joy of life is turned to aching grief The burden of pain, care, misery, grows heavier year by year At length ambition is dead, pride is dead, vanity is dead longing for release is in their place It comes at last—the only unpoisoned gift earth had for them—and they vanish from a world where they were of no consequence, where they achieved nothing, where they were a mistake and a failure and a foolishness, where they left no sign that they have existed—a world which will lament them for a day and forget them for ever Then another myriad takes their place, and copies all they did, and goes along the same profitless road and vanishes as they vanished—to make room for another and another and a million more myriads to follow the same arid path through the same desert and accomplish what the first myriad, and all the myriads that came after it, accomplished—nothing.”

Led by the above impulse individuals have been organising themselves into societies and the latter into great institutions from very early times in human history, with the main object of forgetting the world and for living safe from its manifold deception, the underlying idea being that the world is evil and therefore, escape from it is the first and essential step towards salvation Judging from the experience of everyday life one cannot help sympathising with the latter school of thought in its revolt

against the world more particularly because it is so deeply impressed by the lives of the saintly men and women who have turned their backs on material life with a view to find comfort for their soul. Looking more closely into the matter, however, it will be seen that though there is some truth in both the views, they reveal only one side of the picture and therefore only a partial truth. The whole truth according to the Upanishad consists neither in the denial of the world and its goods nor in their enjoyment by possession but in enjoying them without being greedy. "Enjoy them" says the Upanishad "in renunciation and be not greedy." The Upanishadic view is thus a successful synthesis of the two opposing theories. Of course the enjoyment must be the free and true enjoyment of the spirit and not of the satisfaction of the senses and of the empire of the external world on the senses and organs. Similarly renunciation also is not to be rejection of the world but the renunciation of worldly goods in desire. It is a deep and disinterested acceptance of the world and a joyful recognition that no part of it may be refused. We renounce the world in order to return to it with the knowledge of its oneness to our true self.\*

The terms on which this free enjoyment of the spirit depends are —

1. Complete identification of the individual self with the universal spirit and
2. Freedom from all personal desire to possess exclusively the objects of the world

## DO NOT BE GREEDY

The greed for possession of worldly goods which the Upanishad wants us to give up lasts only as long as we lead an egoistic existence in thought and action by drawing round ourselves a wall of selfishness. In this type of life the individual may be miserable or happy according as the world forces react favourably or unfavourably on him. If, however, he breaks through this wall and gives himself up to his Lord, thus identifying his individual interests with the interests of the Cosmic whole he naturally enjoys and possesses the whole universe in one cosmic consciousness and thus becomes entirely free from that greed of possession which is at the root of the whole trouble. It is in this way that one can enjoy the universe and renounce at the same time and it is thus that we can, "warm both our hands before the fire of life", without burning them.

It may be instructive to note that according to best scientific minds of the present day renunciation of egoistic existence is essential not only for spiritual advancement but even for scientific research in the domain of matter. The following lines from the book of Professor Max Planck of Germany ("*Where is Science going?*") give an idea of how deeply one of the best brains of the day in the domain of science feels on this point.

"Indeed it may be said that every individual science sets about its task by the explicit renunciation of the egocentric and anthropocentric stand-



egocentric interests The progress of science is an excellent illustration of the truth of the paradox that man must lose his soul before he can find it The forces of nature such as electricity for instance, were not discovered by men who started with the set purpose of adapting them for utilitarian purposes Scientific discovery and scientific knowledge have been achieved only by those who have gone in pursuit of it without any practical purpose whatsoever in view The few examples that I have mentioned make this abundantly clear Heinrich Hertz, for instance, never dream that his discoveries would have been developed by Marconi and finally evolved into a system of wireless telegraphy And Roentgen could never have called up a vision of the immense range of beneficial purposes to which the ' X ' rays are applied today "

The ideal thus placed before us by the Upanishad can perhaps be best described in the following pithy words of an English author, " A wise man will desire no more than he can get justly, use soberly, distribute cheerfully and leave contentedly "

It is an ideal to which sooner we advance the better for us , but an ideal is after all an ideal It is something which is ahead of us, and to which we must, therefore, look forward as an ultimate object of attainment Taken in this sense we can only hope in reaching the goal by walking, however, slowly, on the path leading to it If we cannot give up all desire at once we can

at least put a limit to it to begin with. All civilizations of the past in general and our own ancient civilization in particular, have tried to materialize this idea into the form of social and religious institutions. The five daily sacrifices, and the 'Ashram Dharma' of the Vedic-Aryas are but serious attempts in this direction. These institutions served as visible buoys spread on the ocean of life to which men swam and which limited their horizon of ambition. The present age, however is looking at the whole question from a different angle. It has snatched those buoys one by one from the sea of life, on the plea that these buoys shut off the horizon and thus dwarf the world. The result is that Man has in this way been put face to face with the infinite. And the majority of the people of all classes are competing with one another for the exclusive possession of the world without a limit to their ambitions. Neither any single individual nor any nation is able to imagine a degree of power or wealth which might bring satisfaction.

If man had only acted in the light given by Upanishad and had known that the worldly goods which he is endeavouring to possess physically to a limitless extent are not *his* and that there is behind all material existence that Universal spirit which inhabits and permanently controls all that there is in the universe, things would certainly have been different from what they are at present as regards the condition of man on

this earth The most tragic part of the whole story is that man does not care to learn this lesson even from his own accumulated experience which is embodied in human history "The only lesson", says a famous European author, "which History teaches is that man has learnt nothing from History" Perhaps the best illustration of this sad statement is the one which is supplied by the subject under discussion If there is one lesson which is patent on the pages of history of every nation, it is this, that no individual nor any nation, however, powerful at a time, has yet succeeded to hold this world in its possession permanently "If we confine our attention", writes Professor Radha Krishnan in one of his famous books, "to the last 6000 years of our history and represent one hundred years by a minute of the clock as it was suggested sometime ago by doctor Alexander Irvine, we find that Egypt and Babylon are holding the centre of the stage when the hands are at 12 At five minutes past 12, Crete has forged to the front At ten past 12, Assyria and at 15 minutes past Chaldea, China, India, Medea come upon the scene at 20 past 12, if we accept the European estimate of the antiquity of the Chinese and Indian civilizations 25 past 12 Persia is leading At 12-30 we are in Greece, at 12-35 Alexander is wiping some of the Empires off the map and at 12-40 Rome is ruling At 12-45 we are in the beginnings of the powerful modern European nations Every minute of the next ten an Empire

or kingdom goes off the map and another comes in. A few seconds before one o'clock we had the great war."

Perhaps the most important reason for shutting our eyes to the light given by the accumulated experience of humanity lies in the fact that we place too much reliance on the lessons derived mainly from the study of animal kingdom and too little on our own innermost experiences. As long as man believes in the theory of natural selection taught by Darwin and ignores the study of man as a whole he cannot appreciate and realize in his life those higher truths which are revealed in the sayings of the sages and mystics who look inwards and base their teachings on their spiritual experiences. It is these sages who see truth face to face and reveal to man the fact that the struggle and competition belong to his lower nature and not the higher self which when fully developed sees that inner unity which unites all separations and 'which is' in the words of Dr Rabindranath Tagore 'found in the deeper relatedness of all things in the world.' It is this deep insight into the human nature of man and not the superficial knowledge of the material world or even the study of the animal part of the human nature itself which can be helpful in knowing the real art of living. Maxim Gorky relates how after addressing a peasant audience on the subject of Science he was criticised by a peasant spokesman in the following words "Yes, we are taught to fly in the air like

birds, and to swim in the water like the fish but how to live on the earth we do not know "

This last lesson can only be taught by truly religious men and women But alas how often has religion, like science, been exploited by man for his selfish ends and has thus been a source of discord instead of being a means of mutual good will, harmony and love

"It has become a platitude', says H Levy in "Nature' (Ref dated may 31)" to say that modern science has provided man with unlimited power over Nature, but if Nature includes man, the platitude is false Slums, unemployment, starvation and wars bear ample witness to this We may be able to devise the most cunning calculating machine, we may conquer the sea, the air, and the road at incredible speeds, we may flash messages around the globe, probe the atom, and span the outer most confines of space, we may multiply our productivity a thousand fold, but we may have not yet conquered the simple problem of distributing the products of the earth among its inhabitants Has the world population multiplied so enormously that, even with the immensely increased productivity that science has provided, we inhabitants of the globe, cannot supply our needs or are we merely still unscientific fools who have not yet considered the first step toward a rational view of the world supply and distribution' The fact is, of course, that we are still so steeped



ad is thus a rule which goes to the very root of our true happiness here as well as hereafter

"NANAK DUKHYA SAB SANSAR" ("The whole world is feeling miserable; O, Nanak") is a pregnant saying full of meaning and truth but the way to escape from this misery of which one of the greatest Indian Saints of modern times speaks, is not to turn our *back* on the 'SANSAR' as certain schools of philosophy want us to do, but to follow the divine law of right conduct given by the Upanishad To synthesise renunciation and enjoyment in every day life and thus to find pleasure not in physical possession but in dedication is the true life of the spirit as opposed to the life of senses of which latter we are having perhaps a little too much in these days

This Divine rule of life, if followed, will lead not only to the individual but also to national prosperity and happiness. It will at the same time remove all those dangers, supposed and real, which daily threaten our national existence "If we could find" says the American Missionary whom I have already quoted more than once, "Our real enemy we must look not here nor in the outer world but straight into our heart I, personally, am perfectly sure in my heart of hearts that this enemy is no nation abroad or any citizen at home On the other hand this enemy is impersonal an atmosphere we breathe, a spirit into which we live a rule of conduct which we practise and applaud

In one word the enemy we have to fear is materialistic life which most of us are leading to-day. Like ancient Rome which was beset and ruined, we are told, by the Historians, by a physical malaria our nation is just now beset and may eventually be ruined by a spiritual malaria. This malaria threatens to destroy the very substance of our national existence. Mr J H Holmes is here talking about America but his remarks apply to India with even greater force.

Following paragraphs taken from the address of Dr Rabindra Nath Tagore, delivered by him in the Chapel of Manchester College, Oxford, on Sunday May 25, 1930, and quoted in Hibbert Journal for July 1930, give an idea of what the Vedic teaching embodied in this 'Mantra' means for national well being and international harmony and good will —

In this we are enjoined to realise that all facts that move and change have their significance in their relation to one everlasting truth. For then we can be rid of the greed of acquisition, gladly dedicating everything we have to that supreme truth. The change in our mind is immense in its generosity of expression when an utter sense of vanity and vacancy is relieved at the consciousness of a pervading reality.

Most often crimes are committed when it is night. It must not be thought that the only reason for this is that in the dark they are likely to remain undetected. But the deeper reason is that

in the dark the negative aspect of time weakens the positive sense in our own humanity. Our victims, as well as we ourselves are less real to us in the night, and that which we miss within, we desperately seek outside us. Wherever in the human world the individual self forgets its isolation, the light that unifies is revealed, the light of the everlasting Yes, whose sound symbol in India is 'OM' Then it becomes easy for man to be good, not because his badness is restrained, but because his mind no longer dwells in a fathomless night of anarchical world of denial

Over the vast gathering of people the insensitive night darkly broods, the night of unreality. The primitive barbarity of limitless suspicion and mutual jealousy fills the world's atmosphere to-day

the barbarity of the aggressive individualism of nations, pitiless in its greed, unashamed of its beastful brutality

Those that have come out for depredation in this universal night have the indecent audacity to say that such conditions are eternal to man, that the moral ideals are only for individuals but that the race belongs to the primitive nature of the animal

But when we see that in the range of physical power man acknowledges no limits in his dreams, and is not even laughed at when he hopes to visit the neighbouring planet, must he insult his humanity by proclaiming that human nature has reached its limit of moral possibility? We must work with

all our strength for the seemingly impossible, we must be sure that faith in the perfect builds the path for the perfect that the external fact of unity that has surprised us must be sublimated in an internal truth of unity which would light up the truth of Man the eternal

We in India are unfortunate in not having the chance to give expression to the best in us in creating intimate relations with the powerful nations whose preparations are all leading to an enormous waste of resources in a competition of brow beating and bluff. Some great voice is waiting to be heard which will usher in the sacred light of truth in the dark hours of the nightmare of politics the voice which will proclaim that God is over all and exhort us never to covet to be great in a nunciation that gives us the wealth of spirit strength of truth leads us from the illusion of power to the fulness of perfection, to the *SATYAM* who is peace eternal, to the *ADVAITAM* who is the infinite one in the heart of the manifold. But we in India have not yet had the chance. Yet, we have our own human voice which truth demands. The messengers of truth have ever joined hands across centuries, across the seas across historical barriers and they help to raise up the great continent of human brotherhood from

*AVIDYA* ' from the shiny bottom of spiritual apathy. We individuals, however small may be our power and whatever corner of the world we may belong to, have a claim upon us to add to the light of consciousness that comprehends all humanity. All for

this cause I ask your co-operation, not only because co-operation itself is the best aspect of the truth we represent, it is an end and not merely the means

"Let us keep our faith firm in the objectivity of the source of our spiritual ideal of unity, though it cannot be proved by any mathematical logic. Let us proclaim in our conduct that it has already been given to us to be realised, like a song which has only to be mastered and sung, like the morning which has only to be welcomed by raising the screens, opening the doors

The idea of a millennium is treasured in our ancient legends. The instinct cradled and nourished in them has profound meaning. It is like the instinct of a chick which dimly feels that the infinite world of freedom is already given to it, truer than the narrow fact of its immediate life within the egg. An agnostic chick has the rational right to doubt it, but at the same time it cannot help pecking its shell. The human soul confined in its limitation has also dreamt of millennium and striven for a spiritual emancipation which seems impossible of attainment, and yet it feels its reverence for some ever-present source of inspiration in which all its experience of the true, the good and beautiful finds its reality

And, therefore, it has been said by the Upanishad, "Thou must know that God pervades all things that move and change in this moving world, find thy enjoyment in renunciation, covet not what belongs to others."



universe is inhabited by the spirit who is its sole master and that therefore real enjoyment lies in renunciation and dedication and not in physical possession. But this renunciation, the author hastens to add, does not mean the rejection of the physical life nor does it mean in any way that because the whole show of whatsoever we find in the phenomenal world is being run by its 'Isa' (God) who inhabits and governs it and also because the individual has to refer back to the universal being for its source of activity, therefore, a man should lead a life of routine and passivity. On the other hand after giving the basis for the existence and government of the universe and after laying down the law of human conduct on this basis in the first MANTRA, the Upanishad in most unambiguous terms teaches in the second MANTRA that not only is action permissible but is also essential to the well-being of man and that, therefore, instead of refraining from it, the only course open to him is to live actively the full term of his physical existence.

Routine and passivity are the characteristics of matter and lower forms of life, progress and activity those of the higher spiritual life. Routine signifies lack of freedom, and responsibility while change means initiation, freedom and a craving for responsibility. "For millions of years", says Keyserling, "the earth has been revolving round the sun without any desire of change and so it will continue for another million of years. Just so every lower process of life is routine". In his natural condition,

therefore when he is yet in his infancy as regards his spiritual life man hates freedom and shuns responsibility like hell. Even the so-called civilised man with all his logic and philosophy and science, who is spiritually dead does not care for freedom. Every new freedom of thought or action which is offered to him by society he transforms into a new kind of thralldom. The reform movement in the Christian Church set on foot by Luther and carried on with such signal success and at such a terrible sacrifice by his followers began as a revolt of personal conscience and consciousness against the authority and tutelage of Roman Catholic church and aimed at complete freedom of mind and soul. But no sooner had it succeeded in the very least, than it evolved out of itself new forms of bondage and these bondages were in many respects of narrower and prettier kind than those of Roman tradition. As soon as he awakes spiritually, however, there begins in man the struggle between his real self, the spirit and nature which represents the material counterpart of his being. And as the spiritual life grows the struggle becomes more and more keen. The following quotation from H. G. Wells, the famous English author, gives a most lucid expression to this inter relation between the real self of man and his natural counterpart. "And when it comes to introspection, says H. G. Wells, 'then I feel very clearly that I am some thing very distinct from this individual H. G. Wells who eats and sleeps and runs about the world. I feel

that I am linked to him as a boat may be moored to a floating buoy More than that, I have to use his voice, see with his eyes, experience the pain of any physical misfortune that comes to him He is my window on the world and my mouth-piece". "When we are young", continues H G Wells, "we identify ourselves with ourselves very completely and fiercely That may be a biological necessity But as we ripen or as we become aged the separation widens"

Now routine being the characteristic of matter and imitation that of the spirit, the struggle between the two of which Keyserling and H G. Wells speak so eloquently means really an effort on the part of the spirit to come to himself and it is this effort which the Upanishad means in the 2nd 'MANTRA' by the word 'KARMA' The word 'KARMA', be it remembered, does not mean only the daily routine of 'KARMA-KAND' taken in the usual sense of this word but it is the living act of conscious effort which it signifies The rituals, however, grand and imposing they may be, are useful only so far as they lead to the freedom of thought and spirit If however, they tie the soul down to the routine without allowing it to move one way or the other they become a source of danger to real advancement What is, therefore, needed is a *conscious effort made with a definite aim in life by the spirit himself* It is the amount of conscious self-effort put in, which counts in spiritual progress and not the quantity of work done alone It matters

little whether we stand at the top of a hill or sink down to the bottom of the ocean what really matters is whether it is *we* who have either walked up to the summit or gone down to the abyss or is it some outside agency which has blown us up to the top or dragged us down to the bottom

## JUSTIFICATION OF ACTIONS

Conscious effort is thus essential for the self realization of man. There is no other course open to him because it must be remembered that even inaction produces effect in this cosmic movement. Besides it is impossible for one either to remain inactive in the real sense of the word or to escape from physical life. The objection that action necessarily entangles man in the desire behind the action is met by the Upanishad by the use of the word *VAR*. The word *VAR* means Lord and Leader i.e. one who is master and not slave of his material self. The implication is that although man when he acts is entangled in the desire behind action he is not so affected in case he acts with perfect freedom by controlling the desire instead of being controlled by it. Action says the 'mantra cleaves not to a *'VAR*' and gives a straight forward and satisfactory reply to those who shun action.

Life is the manifestation of spirit and as such must depend on work for its expression. Actions are, therefore, the essence of life. It is through actions that soul which is really free but appears

to be bound by what are called the laws of nature, regains its consciousness of freedom and fulfills itself by transcending its material life. This must of course be complete and ungrudging and must be done with perfect freedom of the soul from any desire for power or things. Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore gives a strong rebuke to those who believe in inertia as the path to freedom in the following inimitable words in his famous book *Gitanjali* —

“Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads. Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple with all doors shut? Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee”

“He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the path-maker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and in shower, and his garment is covered with dust. Put off thy holy mantle and even like him come down on the dusty soil”

“Deliverance? Where is this deliverance to be found? Our master himself has joyfully taken upon him the bonds of creation, he is bound with us all for ever”

“Come out of thy meditations and leave aside thy flowers and incense. What harm is there if thy clothes become tattered and stained? Meet him and stand by him in toil and in sweat of thy brow”

Surely sons of a father who is all activity

cannot afford to be parasites and drones. It will be found instructive to study the active lives of modern western savants in the light of the above teaching of the Upanishad and to compare the same with our present mentality of passivity and inaction. The following account of the death scene of Priestley, the discoverer of Oxygen will be read with interest and profit in this connection —

At 8 o'clock Monday morning February 6th 1804 the old minister (Joseph Priestley the discoverer of Oxygen) lay in bed knowing that the end was very near. He called for 3 pamphlets on which he had lately been at work. Always a careful writer he dictated several changes to be made before they were sent to the printer. He then asked his Secretary to repeat the instructions he had given him. The young man was dissatisfied. "Sir you have put it in your own language. I wish it to be in mine." He then repeated his instructions almost word for word and when it was read to him again he was contented. That is right he said "I have done now." Half an hour later he was dead.

The simple life of Tolstoy, one of the greatest men which Russia has produced also teaches the same lesson, as that of Priestley. The following few lines taken again from "Great Thoughts" for April 1933 page 86, will give an idea of the amount of work he put in every day in the interest of humanity—

## “THE SIMPLE LIFE ”

“We heard much of Tolstoy’s simple manner of life, how he rose at five or six every morning and worked till 2 p m. Then he had breakfast alone. After that he spent the afternoon going round his estate and listening to the troubles of his peasants and advising them. He would allow no personal luxury. So far did he carry this out that he insisted on ‘doing out’ his own room. Only when he was ill did he allow an old man in the village, to whom he spoke, to sweep out his rooms for him. He always went about in a simple peasant’s house and used to say, “Now I am going out into Society,” when he walked along the great main road to Kiev which passed through his estate.”

Following paragraph taken from “One True Way of Life” by John Haynes Holmes, a well known American writer and preacher, puts the case in favour of living active life beautifully —

“In the first place, there is the simple fact that we cannot escape life even if we would. On the other hand wherever we go, we remain a denizen of the earth, earthy, we can run away from cities and avoid highways and flee the company of human beings, but we cannot leap off this planet and loose ourselves amid the pathways of stars. Here we are, whether we like it or not, inhabitants of the material world, and, to the extent that we would live at all, we must adapt ourselves to the material necessities of this environment. Then on the other hand, there are these bodies of ours

No matter what we do or where we go we cannot escape the integument of the flesh. We may abandon our homes and cast away our finery and strip ourselves naked of the very garments that cover us, but we still have these bodies with all the sensations and appetites and passions that link them so closely to the realm of temporal experience. It is this fact of the body linked to the soul like the mouldering corpse to the limbs of the Greek prisoner, which has been the final despair of the ascetic who would live in this world only the pure life of the spirit. Unable to rid himself of the flesh, he has sought to repress it, to paralyze and punish it. Nothing is more pathetic, and more terrible than the attempts of desperate men in the quest of sanctity to destroy their physical desires by abusing the body—whipping it, cutting it, starving it, torturing it. But all in vain! It is as impossible to shake off the flesh as it is to jump off the planet!

In the second place, even if we could escape from the world of men, would we want to do so? Is there not something essentially discreditable in running away from a society which is struggling for its life like a man deserting a sinking ship while his fellow passengers are trying desperately to keep it afloat? to-day we have no sympathy with this man. Our interpretation of life is social not individual, and we insist that all men shall live and work together at the common task of salvation, and no one man, for any reason, seek his own deliverance while the world itself is perishing. The one true

way of life must be not away from life, but a way even more deeply and self-sacrificingly into life"

The following paragraph from "Great Thoughts for April, 1933, will also be found instructive in this connection

"God works He is not loafing on His throne until the Day of Judgment He is eternally busy He is pumping at your heart, operating in the Laboratory of your stomach, directing infinite molecules of matter, guarding swarms of living creatures, painting the lilies, feeding the sea monsters, whirling the stars, pushing up the seeds Because He likes it Because the profoundest joy is Achievement. "He that watcheth over Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep My Father worketh hitherto, and I work"

"But", it may be said, 'we are not averse to doing good deeds On the other hand the fact of not finding anything worth doing is what is making us constantly unhappy It is, however, not the ordinary, common place acts of goodness and charity that we wish to do We want to do something wonderful so that we may leave a name in history as Priestley and scores of others of his type have" These people forget that longing to do is not doing and it is sheer waste of life to pass day after day without doing any thing because one does not find anything to do really wonderful We must remember that it is quality and not quantity that is needed in our actions and that this quality of nobleness does not depend in the least on what action is.

Our only motive ought to be to serve and this can best be done by doing good to and helping those nearest to us

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## LIVE HUNDRED YEARS

Though the main idea here is that man should live the full term of his life doing works indeed and not refraining from them, yet the word hundred years throws an interesting side light on the question of average age of man. Different nations have held different views at different times in their respective histories in this connection. The Egyptians for example believed three scores and ten to be man's average duration of life on earth in the time of Moses. For the Hindus as thus 'MAYTRA' shows the figure stood much higher than seventy years in the Vedic period and continued to be so till very recent times. Even as recently as 1800 A. D. there were certain classes of our society who we are told by foreign travellers, lived an average life of one hundred and fifty years and even more. Marco Polo, an Italian traveller, who travelled in India about the year 1280 A.D. and who wrote an account of his travels in 1800 A. D. expresses himself in this connection, while speaking about the province of Lar in the following words —

\*1 All brahmins come from that country on the west. They are best merchants and most truthful. They eat no flesh and drink no wine and lead a life

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Quotes in "*History of Mediaeval Hindu India* Vol III page 281 by C V Vaidya.

of chastity They wear a thread of cotton on their shoulders which crosses the breast and the back They are long-lived as they are very *abstainers* and they have capital teeth owing to a certain herb they chew "

"There are other brahmins called *chugi* (*jogi*) who are longer lived, who are devoted to the idols. They live up to 150 or even 200 years. They eat rice and milk only They drink a potion of sulphur and quick silver twice a day which leads to longevity They fast many days and drink nothing but water They sleep on ground and yet they live long "

Miss Yule observes on this in a note "that Lai includes Southern Gujrat, Thana and Chau Konkani brahmins adopted trade only when they were expelled from Goa This high praise of the truthfulness of brahmins was just and as old as the Greeks It is not only given by Greek writers but by Hiuen Tsang and also by Arab travellers"

It is extremely depressing to compare and contrast the above account given by Marco Polo with the modern state of our society While in Europe and America the duration of life has been rising continuously for *so many years*, as the result of conscious human effort in this direction, we in India have not yet been able to decide whether it is at all possible for us to do so consistently with the views held by our Shastras on the subject Columns after columns of our weeklies and dailies are sometimes wasted in discussing this problem and the

public mind instead of being inspired and informed with the latest information regarding the health conditions of life is depressed with theories and dogmas which have long become obsolete and which can only have historical interest. The following figures collected by me some years ago will be found instructive in this connection —

1 In England 75 years ago one fourth of the children died before the age of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years. During the last ten years *these one fourth died at  $33\frac{1}{2}$* .

2 During the last 75 years average duration of life has extended by not less than 15 years in the leading nations of the world

3 Death rate in America is 14 per 1000

" " " India is 80 , ,

Average age in Europe is 45 years

" , , India is 24 years.

4 From 1900—1922 there has been a gain of 12 years in the average expectation of life in England and Wales

The average life in Spain in 1900 was 44, while in 1922 it was 56

Figures for America are 48 years in 1901 and 58 in 1920

In India we had 24.9 in 1901 and 25.8 in 1921

In Punjab we had 20 in 1901 and 25.4 in 1921  
The average life of a Lahori varies from  $21\frac{1}{2}$  to 22 years

In the year 1924 out of 1000 children born in Lahore 224.6 died in the first year

For Bombay the number is double that of Lahore. Nothing can, perhaps, give a better idea of the consummation of works and the spirit in which they must be done than the following paragraph taken from Sri Aurobindo Ghosh's essay on "The Superman"

"Learn thou first to be the instrument of God and to accept thy Master. The instrument is this outward thing thou callest thyself. It is a mould of mind, a driving force of power, a machinery of foam, a thing full of springs and cogs and clamps and devices. Accept thyself humbly, yet proudly, devotedly, submissively and joyfully as a divine instrument.

Learn thou first absolutely to obey. The sword does not choose where it shall strike, the arrow does not ask whither it shall be driven, the springs of the machine do not insist on the product that shall be turned out from its labour. These things are settled by the intention and working of Nature and the more the conscious instrument learns to feel and obey the pure and essential law of its nature, the sooner shall the work turned out become perfect and flawless.

Let thyself drive in the breath of God and be as a leaf in the tempest, put thyself in His hand and be as the sword that strikes and the arrow that leaps to its target. Let thy mind be as spring of the machine, let thy force be as the shooting of a piston, let thy work be as the grinding and shaping descent of the steel on its object. Let thy speech be the clang of the hammer on the anvil and the

moan of the engine in its labour and the cry of the trumpet that proclaims the force of God to the regions In whatever way do as an instrument the work that is natural to thee and appointed

Because thou hast mistaken the instrument for the worker and the master and because thou seekest to choose by the ignorance of thy desire thy own state and thy own profit and thy own utility therefore thou hast suffering and anguish and hast many times to be thrust into the red hell of the furnace and hast many times to be reborn and reshaped and retempered until thou shalt have learned thy human lesson

Know thyself next as the worker Understand thy nature to be the worker and thy own nature and All Nature to be thyself

But in thee there is a special movement, a proper nature and an individual energy Follow that like a widening river till it leads thee to its infinites source and origin

Know therefore thy body to be a knot in matter and thy mind to be a whirl in universal MIND and thy life to be an eddy of LIFE that is forever Know thy force to be every other beings force and thy knowledge to be a glimmer from the light that belongs to no man and thy works to be made for thee and be delivered from the error of thy personality

When that is done, thou shalt take thy free delight in the truth of thy individual being and

in thy strength and in thy glory and in thy beauty and in thy knowledge , and in the denial of these things thou shalt take delight also

The worker has the joy of her works and the the joy of her LOVER for whom she works She knows herself to be his consciousness and his force, his knowledge and his reserving of knowledge his unity and his self-division, his infinity and the finite of his being Know thy self also the delight of thy lover

Be one with THAT in thy being, commune with THAT in thy consciousness, obey THAT in thy force, be subject to THAT and clasped by it in thy delight, fulfill That in thy life and body and mentality Then before an opening eye within thee there shall emerge that true and only Person, thyself and not thyself, all others and more than all others, the DIRECTOR and ENJOYER of thy works, the master of the worker and the instrument, the REVELLER and FRAMPLER in the dance of the universe and yet hushed and alone with thee in thy soul's silent and inner chamber

Thou shalt contain in thy being thyself and all others and be that which is neither thyself nor all others Of works this the consummation and the summit "

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" You say the soul is nothing but the resultant of bodily powers Why then, is my soul more luminous when my bodily powers begin to fail ? Winter is on my head, but the eternal spring is on my heart I breathe at this hour the fragrance of the lilies, the violets, and the roses as at twenty years The nearer I approach the end, the plainer I hear around me the immortal symphonies of the worlds which invite me It is marvellous, yet simple It is fairy tale and it is History "

" For half a century I have been writing my thoughts in prose and in verse, history, philosophy, drama, romance tradition, satire, ode and song I have tried all But I feel I have not said the thousandth part of what is in me When I go down to the grave, I can say like many others, 'I have finished my *day's* work' " But I cannot say, " I have finished my life " My day's work will begin again the next morning The tomb is not a blind alley it is a thoroughfare It closes on the twilight and opens on the dawn ' "

An American writer has beautifully summed up the arguments in favour of life beyond death in one of his sermons in the following words —

"We may believe in immortality because there is no reason for not believing in it In discussion of this question we are constantly reminded that immortality has never been proved To which

there is the immediate and inevitable reply that immortality has never been disproved. My mind is absolutely at one with John Stuart Mill when he said upon this question ' ' To any one who feels it conducive either to his satisfaction or his usefulness to hope for a future state there is no hindrance to his indulging that hope

My second reason for believing in immortality is to be found in the universality of the idea. What I have in mind here is that immortality is not merely a belief to be accepted but an idea to be explained. " Here is this wonderful thought, says Emerson where ever man ripens, this audacious belief presently appears. As soon as thought is exercised, this belief is inevitable whence came it? Who put it in the mind? Emerson could not explain the fact, as it has appeared in all ages and among all peoples, except on the supposition that the thought of immortality is ' not sentimental' but ' elemental' elemental in the sense that it is grounded in the necessities and forces we possess

That this idea is something more than idle speculation is shown by the philosophy of evolution, which has given to us fundamental interpretation of life as " the continuous adjustment of inner relations to outer relations ' When we find in plant or animal some inner faculty or attitude which is universally present, and which persists from generation to generation we may be perfectly sure that it represents some correspondence with reality which has made survival possible

Life is so definitely a matter of the successful coordination of inner relations with outer relations, that it is altogether impossible to conceive that in any specific relation the subject term is real and the objective term is non-existent. What exists within is the sign and symbol, and guarantee, of what exists without.

Now man has always existed with the thought of immortality. He has never been able to live without it, even when he has tried to deny it, he has not been able to get rid of it. Our faculties, our attributes, our ideas, as we have seen, are the reflection of the environment to which we adapt ourselves as the condition of survival. What we feel within is the reaction upon what exists without. As the eye proves the existence of light, and the ear the existence of sound, so the immortal hope may not unfairly be said to prove the existence of immortal life. It is thus that we mean when we say that the universality of the idea is an argument for the acceptance of the idea. In his great essay on 'immortality', Emerson tells us of two men who early in life spent much of their time together in earnest search for some proof of immortality. An accident separated them, and they did not meet again for a quarter of a century. They said nothing, "but shook hands long and cordially". At last his friend said, "Any light, Albert?" "None", replied Albert. "Any light", Lewis? "None", he replied. And

Emerson comments ' that the impulse which drew these two minds to this enquiry through so many years was better affirmative evidence for immortality than their failure to find a confirmation was negative '

" I refer to this fact so memorably stated by Cicero " There is in the mind of men he says, " I know not how, a certain presage, as it were of a future existence and this take deepest root in the greatest geniuses and the most exalted souls They are not separated in this case as in so many cases, from the masses of ignorant and superstitious men by doctrines of dissent On the contrary in this case the ideas of the highest are at one with the hopes of the humblest among mankind

" And in this matter of immortality there is a consensus of best opinion which constitutes to my mind, one of the most remarkable phenomena in the whole history of human thinking I have no time this morning to list the names of those who had believed in the immortality of the soul If I did so, I should have to include the names of scientists from Aristotle to Darwin and Eddington, of philosophers from Plato to Kant and Bergson, of poets from Sophocles to Goethe and Robert Browning, of ethical teachers and public leaders from Socrates to Tolstoy and Mahatma Gandhi There are dissenters from the doctrine, like Epictetus yesterday and Bernard Shaw today, but the consensus of opinion the other way is remarkable Even the famous

heretics stand in awe before this conception of eternity. Thus Voltaire declared that "reason agrees with revelation that the soul is immortal." Thomas Paine affirmed that he did not "trouble (himself) about the manner of future existence," so sure he was that "the Power which gave existence is able to continue it in any form." Even Robert G. Ingersoll, confessed as he stood by his brother's grave, that love could "hear the rustle of an angel's wing." In the light of such testimony as this, are we not justified in believing that there is reason for believing in immortality? If not, then we know, with James Martineau, "who are those who are mistaken. Not the mean and grovelling soul who never reached to so great a thought. No, the deceived are the great and holy, whom all men revere, the men who have lived for something better than their happiness and spent themselves on the altar of human good. Whom are we to reverence, and what can we believe, if the inspirations of the highest nature are but cunningly devised fables?"

"My fourth reason this morning for believing immortality is found in what I would call man's over endowment as a creature of this earth, his surplus equipment for the adventure of this present life. The outfit of man seems to constitute something like "a vast over-provision" for his necessities. If this life is all, in other words, what need has man for all these mental faculties, moral aspirations, spiritual ideals which make him to be distinctively a man as contrasted with the animal? Man is equipped

for this environment, and also for something more. Why is this not proof that he is destined for something more? As we estimate the length of the voyage of a ship by the character of its equipment why should we not estimate the length of man's voyage upon the sea of life in exactly the same way? What man bears within him self is evidence that he is destined for some farther port than any upon these shores.

'I would specify as my fifth reason for believing in immortality the lack of co-ordination or proportion between a man's body and a man's mind. If these two are to be regarded as aspects of a single organism adapted only to the conditions of this present life why do they so early begin to pull apart? For a while, to be sure there seems to be a real co-ordination between soul and body between the personality on the one hand and the physical frame which it inhabits, on the other. Thus the child is in nothing so delightful as in the fact that it is a perfect animal. Then as maturity approaches two exactly opposite processes begin to take place within the life of the human being. On the other hand the body begins to lose its resiliency and harden, to stop its growth and become static, then to decay and at last to dissolve. But the personality of man is an enduring thing. As the body weakens through the years, so the soul only grows the stronger and more wonderful. As the body approaches irrevocably to its end, so the soul only mounts to what seems to be a new beginning. We come to death, in other words, only

to discover within ourselves exhaustless possibilities Victor Hugo, protesting against the waning of his powers said " For half a century I have been writing my thoughts in prose and verse

but I feel that I have not said a thousandth part of what is to me" Said James Martineau, on his 80th birthday, "How small a part of my plans have I been able to carry out ' Nothing is so plain as that life at its fullest on earth is but a fragment ' "

"But there is lack of co-ordination not only between our personalities and our physical bodies, but also between our personalities and the physical world This is my sixth reason for believing in immortality—that our souls have potentialities and promises which should not, as indeed they cannot, be subjected to the chance vicissitudes of earthly fortune What are we going to say, for example, when we see some life of eminent utility, of great achievement, of character and beauty, and noble dedication to mankind, not merely borne down by the body, but cut off sharply before its time by an automobile accident, a disease germ, a bit of poisoned food ?

"There is nothing more familiar, of course than the fact that the world is the result of a natural process of development which has been going on for unnumbered millions of years If this process is rational, as man's processes are rational, it must have been working all these aeons of time to the achievement of some permanent and worthy end What

is this end ? Or must we believe that, from the beginning, it has been like a child's tower of blocks, built up only to be thrown down ?”

It was the challenge of this contingency, of evolutions coming in the end to nought that moved not less a man than Charles Darwin, agnostic though he was, to proclaim the conviction that ‘it is an intolerable thought that man and all other sentient beings are doomed to complete annihilation after such long-continued slow process’

(8) “This leads us deep into the realm of science—to a fundamental principle that provides my eighth reason for believing in immortality. I refer to the principle of persistence or conservation. ‘Whatever is’ says Sir Oliver Lodge, speaking of forms of energy in the physical universe, both was and shall be. And he quotes the famous statement of professor Tait, that “persistence or conservation, is the test or criterion of real existence

“If it is impossible to think of physical energy as appearing and disappearing, coming into and going out of existence, why is it not equally impossible to think of intellectual or moral or spiritual energy as acting in this same haphazard fashion ? It is madness to conceive that the heat of an engine must be preserved, while the love of a heart may be thrown away. For the universe is one. Its laws are everywhere the same. What science has discovered about the conservation of energy is only the physical equivalent of what religion has discovered about the immortality of the soul

(9) "That all the values of life exist in man, and in man alone. For the world as we know it and love it is not the world as we receive it, but as we make it by the creative genius of the inward spirit. It is man's ear which has heard the cuckoo as a "wandering voice", his eye which has seen "the floor of heaven thick inlaid with patines of bright gold;" his mind which has found "sermons in stones, books in the running brooks, and good in everything." All that is precious in the world—all its beauty, its wonder, its meaning—exists in man, and by man and for man. And we are asked to believe that the being who sees and glorifies shall perish, while the world which he has seen and glorified endures. Such conclusion is irrational. The being who created the world must himself be greater than the world. The soul which conceives the Truth, Goodness, and Beauty must itself be as eternal as the Truth, Goodness and Beauty which it conceives."

(10) "It is the pragmatic argument that faith in an eternal life beyond the grave justifies itself in terms of the life that we are now living upon this side of the grave. It is the essence of the pragmatic philosophy that what is true will conduce to life, as food conduces to health, and that what is false will destroy life, as poison the body."

"We see a universe where spiritual values, not material forces, prevail, the man who lives an immortal life takes on immortal qualities. His character assumes the proportions of his faith, and his



Tagore expresses the same belief in his famous book — “GĪTANGALĪ” in the following inimitable words —

“I was not aware of the moment when I first crossed the threshold of this life

“What was the power that made me open out into this vast mystery like a bud in the forest at midnight’ When in the morning I looked upon the light I felt in a moment that I was no stranger in this world, that the inscrutable without name and form had taken me in its arms in the form of my own mother ”

“Even so, in death the same unknown will appear as ever known to me And because I love this life, I know I shall love death as well

“The child cries out when from the right breast the mother takes it away in the very next moment to find in the left one its consolation ’

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## WORLDS OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS AND SLAYING OF SOUL

There are two courses open to man in the conduct of his life in this world He may either be a member of the commonwealth of the universe as suggested by the first “MANTRA’ of Upanishad and play his part as such or, as most of us do, lead an exclusive existence standing out from the cosmos with different interests from the rest of it The first path leads to light and harmony while the second course results in discord, sense of weakness, and obscurity The first is like living in the world

of light while the second is the world of darkness. By harmony and oneness with the universe one sees things in their true perspective. He can discover interdependence of various elements comprising the universe. He perceives the divine law working everywhere which co-ordinates all apparently detached facts and thus finds before his eye a picture of a complete whole. By living a life of exclusiveness, on the other hand, the individual builds a wall of selfishness round himself which cuts him off from the rest of the universe and thus obstructing his view of the whole, gives him only a detached view of individual things and keeps him in the dark regarding their interrelations. Only the things within the wall of egoism he believes to be his. Every new addition to these makes him happy and gives him the satisfaction of increase in his acquisitions. The process continues all through life. In the meantime to protect the possessions and to make them secure the partition wall of selfishness is raised higher and higher and is thickened more and more until by the time he dies the partition of egoism separating him from the rest of the universe becomes so high and thick as to obstruct all light. The result is obvious. The wall which was built as a protection and as a security for the so-called possessions imprisons the individual in the dark dungeon of his own making. It is thus that he loses sight of his own true being in the dark shadows of the wall. And it is this loss of spiritual insight caused by his close companion

ship with the material objects, at the expense of kindred spirits, in the dark dungeons of selfishness of his own making which the Upanishad calls "Slaying of the soul". The soul in its essence is immortal. It never dies but when the measuring stick and the scale of evaluation of all that constitutes human advancement is material and not spiritual and when, therefore the society sets conventional prices on its members in terms of worldly possessions, the soul ceases to find expression and becomes dead to all appearances. Dr. Tagore gives a beautiful picture of this wall of selfishness which most of us are daily erecting round ourselves in the following inimitable words in "GITANGALI" —

'Obstinate are the trammels, but my heart aches when I try to break them. Freedom is all I want, but to hope for it I feel ashamed''

"I am certain that priceless wealth is in thee, and that thou art my best friend, but I have not the heart to sweep away the tinsel that fills my room

"He whom I enclose with my name is weeping in this dungeon. I am ever busy building this wall all around, and as this wall goes up into the sky day by day I lose sight of my true being in its dark shadow

'I take pride in this great wall, and I plaster it with dust and sand lest a least hole should be left in this same, and for all the care I take I lose sight of my true being''



It is the faculty which enables us to reason and which prying into the secrets of nature gives us more and more light about the external world and the internal self. It makes us see far and near both in space and time. The sciences of Chemistry, Physics, Astronomy, History Archeology and in fact every branch of human knowledge owe their existence to the working of mind. This is the organ which distinguishes man from the lower forms of life and it is the development of this entity to a large extent which gives us the key to the distinction between man and man on the scale of human evolution. Mind is thus an extremely important organ, but it does not give us the complete definition of man. There is yet another and by far the most important entity which constitutes the real man. This last constituent of human personality is what is called spirit or soul. While lowest form of life finds expression in the working of senses only and mind feeds itself on the data supplied by the senses, the soul uses both mind and senses as instruments for its expression. And its characteristic attributes are appreciation of beauty, feelings of love and sympathy and regard for truth. These qualities of the soul if properly nourished and carefully nused can absorb within the human self the entire universe both living and non-living. Thus it is the soul which responds to beauty in the material world and to sympathy and love in the world of living beings. My eyes, ears and other senses acquaint me with the bare fact of existence of myself. They also inform me of the world outside me by

enabling me to see hear, smell, touch and taste My mind gives me a knowledge of the working of the universe but it is my soul alone which through love and sympathy makes me realise the inner meaning and true significance of all that exists Senses thus give me the bare fact of existence of myself and my surroundings mind supplies me with knowledge of their inter relations and love which is the chief characteristic of soul of their realisation It is open to me to live either or all of these three types of life, remembering, however all the while that (1) there is a regular gradation from the purely sensual to the purely mental and from the latter to a complete spiritual life and (2) that the one fact which is favourable to or against the development of all the three forms of life respectively is the presence or absence of light and (3) that each step on the scale means enlargement of life on the whole and transcendence of life below In living a purely sensual life I confine my existence to the physical plane, in my struggle to rise up the scale I approach to the mental life the animal giving place to mental self and so on the struggle continues until the individual self both animal and mental is transcended and is ultimately superseded by the spirit itself It is this last life which is called the life of the spirit by Upanishad and its opposite the spiritual death. I may if I choose to live a purely sensual life and be in the words of the Upanishad enveloped in blinding darkness or on the other hand live a purely spiritual life and be one with the source of all light. Going up the

scale from material to the spiritual life means going into the light, conversely going down and turning my back to the spiritual side of existence brings me down to a state of complete darkness. While the life of the spirit gives me insight into the real meaning of the working of the external world as well as introduce me into the inner-most recesses of human heart its stultification leads me step by step into the dark abyss of ignorance where as an embryonic cell I can hardly be distinguished from an inert mass of matter. I have tendencies within me both natural and acquired which either prompt me to rise or tempt me to slide down the scale. Just as the chicken within the egg has wings in a rudimentary form although it cannot see them, similarly the soul has inherent potentialities development of which helps him to go the way of light and emancipation heaven-ward and the suppression of which chains him down to the material world of darkness.

Both present and past records of religious history of man show pathetic efforts on his part for complete spiritual freedom. These attempts are like the efforts of a child who in the words of Dr Tagore sets adrift on a paper boat his dream of reaching the distant unknown. The efforts may prove unfruitful as they must do in the ultimate realisation of the goal but they point the direction in which the goal lies and are a sure test of the fact that a man is not in his essence matter but spirit, and that the stultification of the latter leads him to a state of blinding darkness.



darkness of his ignorance to be the only things worth having. In the darkness of our consciousness we are more or less confined to our individual selves and greater the darkness the lesser we see other things and their relation with each other. With the dawn of light, however, the scale of values takes its right position and we become conscious of the cosmic whole of which we are parts

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## ‘4TH MANTRA’

अनेजदे कम्पनसो जयीयो नैनद्देवा आप्नुयना पूर्यमर्षत् ।  
तद्वावतो ज्ञानस्येति तिष्ठ स्मिन्न पोमात्तरिष्याद्घाति ॥४॥

‘One unmoving, that is swifter than mind  
That the gods reach not, for it progresses over in  
front That standing passes beyond others as they  
run Remaining in Him and supported by Him the  
VAYU maintains all works in other words He is the  
life of the life force’

The last sentence has been differently translated  
by different acharyas Shankar's rendering runs  
thus — ‘Being the primal force, it sustains all the  
functions of nature’ According to Aurobindo  
Ghosh — ‘MATARISVAN seems to mean He who ex-  
tends himself in the mother or the container  
Whether that be the containing mother element,  
Ether or the material energy called earth in the  
Veda and spoken of there as the Mother It is a  
vedic epithet of the God Vayu who, representing the  
divine principle in the life energy, PRANA, extends  
himself in Matter and vivifies its forms Here it  
signifies the divine Life-power that presides in all  
forms of cosmic activity’

‘‘APAS as it is accentuated in the version of the  
white Yajurveda, can mean only waters’ If this  
accentuation is disregarded, we may take it as the



materialism cannot in the light of modern scientific research accept the concrete as real and the phenomenon as the essence. In the words of Dr Radha Krishnan. Even absolute materialism is idealism though of a crude kind for the matter to which all existence is reduced is not a concrete actuality but an abstract idea.

It is this idealist view of the universe that is contemplated in the MANTRA by making a contrast between appearance and reality, fact and truth, existence and essence. The word *ANAJAT* which has been used here as against *JATATIANO JAJAT* in the first MANTRA shows the contrast clearly. The phenomenal world says the Upanishad is changing constantly but the reality underlying it is changeless. We observe multiplicity everywhere in the phenomenal world but all this multiplicity is the expression of one unity which has been called by various names. God is one not because there is nothing else beside God in the universe as the new vedantist would say but because there is no other God. The Teaching cuts directly at the root of polytheism which is the natural conception for man to hold at his earliest stage of mental and religious consciousness. It is interesting to compare in this connection the views held by various nations at the early period of their history regarding their respective Gods. Of the Chinese deities Moore says — 'These powers have no plastic, dramatic individuality like the Gods of Greece. No mythology recites their exploits. They have definite functions and by these alone they themselves

are defined While Greece represented the gods in the likeness of man, in a Japanese temple the deities are represented by some holy object in which the spiritual presence dwells, thus the mirror is the symbol of the presence of the sun goddess In China heaven is the supreme Emperor and determines both the moral and natural order, in Japan the sun goddess takes the highest place but has no relation to any moral order, the Ethiopians imagine their God flat-nosed and black, the Thracians blue-eyed and red-haired To quote Xenophanes's own words, Homer and Hesiod ascribed to Gods every thing that to average men is a shame and disgrace — theft, adultery and deceit”<sup>\*</sup>

The word “EKAM” expresses also the freedom of a complete being that is freedom from limits of time, space, laws of causality and relativity It means that there is nothing which is not gathered up in its being, nothing which is not revealed in it And there is utter absence of all discord It is perfect being perfect consciousness and perfect freedom. ‘SAT’, ‘CHIT’ and ‘ANANDA’ Being Truth and Freedom are distinguished in the divine but not divided

He is unmoving because motion implies change either in space or in time or in both and God being beyond time and space cannot be thought of as moving Nor is there any change of relations in Him because the laws of relativity and causality do not apply to him Humanity in its infancy believed

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<sup>\*</sup> (“*Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*“)

in more than one God. Each tribe worshipped a deity of its own making. The belief in polytheism was based on the vanity of human desires and aims. Today, however and even in ancient times in our land, man knows better. We believe in one God who is our mother, father and friend who loves us and protects us. This belief in monotheism is the outcome of the intense fear of mankind's experience the totality of existence as a unity full of meaning and is supported by the existence of law and order which the scientist and the philosopher see revealed every where in nature and in the world of thought. But it is primarily based on the spiritual experience of saints, seers and poets of all ages as shown by the following significant and rapturous lines taken from Uttagali.

Have you not heard his silent steps?

He comes comes ever comes

Every moment and every day, every day and every night he comes comes ever comes.

Many a song have I sung in many a mood of mind but all their notes have always proclaimed, "He comes comes ever comes."

'In the fragrant days of sunny April through the forest path he comes, comes ever comes.'

'In sorrow after sorrow it is his steps that press upon my heart and it is the golden touch of his feet that makes my joy to shine.'

'I know not from what distant time thou art ever coming, nearer to meet me. Thy sun and stars can never keep thee hidden from me for aye.'

'In many a morning and eve thy footsteps have been heard and thy messenger has come within my heart and called me in secret.'

'I know not why today my life is all astir, and a feeling of tremulous joy is passing through my heart'

"It is as if the time were come to wind up my work, and I feel in the air faint smell of thy sweet presence"

"The ancient Aiyans", says Aurobindo Ghosh in his nice little book, 'The brain of India' "knew that man was not separated from the universe, but was only a homogeneous part of it, as a wave is part of the ocean. An infinite energy *PRAKRITI*, *MAYA* or *SHAKTI*, pervades the world, forms itself into every name and form, and the clod, the plant, the insect, the animal, the man are, in their phenomenal existence, merely more or less efficient *ADHARAS* of this energy. We are each of us a dynamo into which waves of that energy have been generated and stored, and are being perpetually conserved, used up and replenished. The same force which moves in the star and the planet, moves in us, all our thought and action are merely its play and borne of the complexity of its functionings"

So far the modern western scientific thought agrees with the ancient Indian view point. But when we proceed further a sharp division between the two becomes clearly visible. Let me explain this



distinction also in the words of the same Indian author who is responsible for the above expression of Indian angle of vision. Continue Sri Anand in to Ghosh in his book quoted above —

" All human energy has a physical base. The mistake made by many an materialist is to suppose that he has to be everything and confuse it with the source. The source of life and energy is not material but spiritual but the base, the foundation on which the life and energy stand and work is physical. The ancient Hindus clearly recognised this distinction between *Kamas* and *Pratishta*, the north pole and the south pole of being. Earth, fire, air & matter is the *Pratishta*. *Brahman* or spirit is the *Kamas*.

Man may not realise the truth of this fundamental reality as long as his view is self limited but a time comes when his eyes open to a new sight and he sees revealed before him a mystery which fills him with awe, reverence and humility. All that is necessary for the realisation of this ultimate truth of things is to wake from the sleep of ensuous existence to the joy of spiritual life. The following lines from *Gitanjali*, to quote that famous book once more place most clearly the whole world of appearance in its true relation to what lies behind it. They also give a glorious account of the intense feelings of rapture of the seekers after God in the midst of the boisterous worldly life around them and point the way, in most unambiguous terms, to

the discovery of the fundamental reality which they are searching after —

‘In this playhouse of infinite forms I have had my play and here have I caught sight of him that is formless

My whole body and my limbs have thrilled with his touch, and if the end comes here, let it come let this be my parting words”

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“When my play was with thee I never questioned who thou wert I knew nor shyness nor fear, my life was boisterous

“In the early morning thou wouldst call me from my sleep like my own comrade and lead me running from glade to glade

On those days I never cared to know the meaning of songs thou singest to me Only my voice took up the tunes, and my heart danced in their cadence

Now when the play time is over, what is this sudden sight that is come upon me? The world with eyes bent upon thy feet stands in awe with all its silent stars,”

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“The same stream of life that runs through my veins night and day runs through the world and dances in rhythmic measures

It is the same life that shoots in joy through the dust of the earth in numberless blades of grass and breaks into tumultuous waves of leaves and flowers



" The morning time is past, and the noon In the shade of evening my eyes are drowsy with sleep Men going home glance at me and smile and fill me with shame. I sit like a beggar maid, drawing my shirt over my face and when they ask me, what it is I want I drop my eyes and answer them not

I sit on the grass and gaze upon the sky and dream of the sudden splendour of thy coming—— all the lights ablaze, golden pennons flying over thy car, and they at the road-side raise me from the dust, and set at thy side this ragged beggar girl a-tremble with shame and pride, like a creeper in summer breeze

But time glides on and still no sound of the wheels of thy chariot Many a procession passes by with noise and shouts and glamour of glory Is it only thou who wouldst stand in the shadow silent and behind them all? And only I who would wait and weep and wear out my heart in vain longing?

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The morning sea of silence broke into ripples of bird songs, and the flowers were all merry by the roadside, and the wealth of gold was scattered through the rift of the clouds while we busily went on our way and paid no heed

We sang no glad songs nor played, we went not to the village for barter, we spoke not a word nor smiled, we lingered not on the way We quickened our pace more and more as the time sped by

The sun rose to the mid-sky and doves cooed

in the shade    Withered leaves danced and whirled  
in the hot air of noon    The shepherd boy drowsed  
and dreamed in the shadow of the banyan tree and  
I laid myself down by the water and stretched my  
tired limbs on the grass

My companions laughed at me in scorn    they  
held their heads high and hurried on    they never  
looked back nor rested    they vanished in the distant  
blue haze    They crossed many meadows and hills  
and passed through strange far away countries  
All honour to you heroic host of the interminable  
path !

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### SWIFTER THAN MIND

The reality which underlies the phenomenal world must in the very nature of things be unfettered by time space laws of causality and relativity to which all nature is subject and must therefore be unapproachable by mind which is the very creation of nature    Besides mind is only one element of our being    We have other faculties too besides our minds and all these faculties must combine in one integrated self before we can have the true and maximum knowledge of the Transcendental Reality which we are searching after and which must, however, always remain unknown to us finite beings in its perfection    It is this total functioning of the whole man which is called spiritual life as distinguished from intellectual moral or ethical activity and which endows man with that intuition or



which have their origin in the heart of man. "It is man," says Haldington, "who contains the secret of the world: man with his love of truth, his sense of order and his responsibility for right. Nature may be expressed in mathematics but not man who has conceived the Science of mathematics to express the correspondence which he finds between the order of nature and the working of his own mind. It is conceivable that mechanical science might produce in some distant future a robot—a creature which thinks and believes—and thus may duplicate the mechanical activities of a man's life. But it is not conceivable that such a robot whatever he thinks and believes would actually *care* about his thoughts and beliefs. He would never ask if a thing is true, never search for an answer to the question as to why it is true. It is this concern for the truth of all we say and do that is central to the life of man and that makes man to be something wholly separate from all physical phenomena and thus in essence a spiritual reality.

Professor Einstein, the famous author of the theory of Relativity, also drew attention of the thinking world to this aspect of the relation of ultimate knowledge to experiences other than those based on the application of sense organs and mental faculties. This love and regard for truth as the characteristic quality of human soul has been very nicely expressed in the following words by Einstein in his preface to "*Where is Science going?*" by

Professor Max Planck Speaking of the whole-hearted devotion of men of science to the work of research he says —'The state of mind which furnishes the driving power here resembles that of the devotee or the lover The long-sustained effort is not inspired by any set plan or purpose Its inspiration arises from a hunger of the soul '

Professor Einstein, also drew attention of the thinking world to the relation of ultimate knowledge to experiences other than those based on the application of sense organ and mental faculties when in June, 1930, in a talk with a fellow scientist he said "Speaking of the spirit that informs modern scientific investigation, I am of the opinion that all the finer speculations in the realm of science spring from a deep religious feeling and that without such feeling they would not be fruitful " He further cleared himself on this point when he said, in reply to another question "The intuitive and constructive spiritual faculties must come into play wherever a body of scientific truth is concerned A body of scientific truth may be built up with the stone and mortar of its own teachings, logically arranged but to build it up and understand it you must bring into play the constructive faculties of the artist No house can be built with a stone and mortar alone Personally I find it of the highest importance to bring all the various faculties of the understanding into co-operation By this I mean that our moral leanings and tastes, our sense of beauty

and religious instincts are all tributary forces in helping the reasoning faculty towards its highest achievements

Again in his preface to *Where is Science going?* by Prof. Max Planck he emphasizes the same point of the inability of reasoning faculty to fathom the mystery of nature in the following words —

"Thus the supreme task of the physicist is the discovery of the most general elementary laws from which the world picture can be deduced logically. But there is no logical way to the discovery of these elemental laws. There is only the way of intuition."

We thus see that neither mind nor senses are the real source of knowledge about the ultimate realities. It is not the sense perception nor even the mental conceptions which give us the true light. This illumination can only come from the experiences gained through our innermost beings. In other words the essence of the phenomenal world cannot be discovered through physical or mental faculties but can only be seen through spiritual experience. "It is this experience which a poet feels as he gazes upon a rich landscape. It is this experience which we all have when we look upon a sunset or a quiet sea. It is this experience which prompts a man to lay down his life for his ideal or for his friend. It is the experience of the saint as he hears the voice of his conscience and of the seer who catches the vision of the pure desire. It is this experience which is genuine in contrast

with what is not first hand It is this experience that Wordsworth felt when he said —

“That serene and blessed mood,  
In which the affections gently lead us on  
Untill, the breath of the corporeal frame  
And even the motion of our human blood  
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep  
In body, and become a living soul”

Nothing could give us a truer picture of the authors of Upanishadas sitting absorbed in their meditation, pondering over the deepest problems of the origin and destiny of the universe than the above beautiful lines of Wordsworth

Alfred Noyes, the great English poet, sums up the views of the leading scientist of the present day as also of the ancient Aryan sages with regard to the true avenue of knowledge in the following words in his famous poem “Watchmen of the sky ”

Is there no song  
To touch this moving universe of law  
With ultimate light, the glimmer of that great  
dawn

Which over our ruined altars yet shall break  
In purer splendour and restore mankind  
From darker dreams than even Lucietius knew  
To vision of that one Power which guides the  
world ?

How shall men find it ? Only though those  
doors

Which, opening inward, in each separate soul  
Give each man access to that soul of all  
Living within each life, not to be found  
Or known, till, looking inward each alone  
Meets the unknowable and eternal God”



all of a sudden it flashed through my mind that my mother was there. At once I stopped and went back to her and touched her feet. She held my hand, looked into my face and said—"You have come"

Callousness is another reason why we can not see even partially the presence of the divine in and around us. Our faculties are not sensitive enough to be conscious of that which needs such a keen sensibility to be felt and perceived. To be made sufficiently sensitive, these senses require to be cleaned to the very height of efficiency. While even a speck of dust on the floor of his house or any single article at a wrong place in his drawing room upsets a refined English man, even heaps of dust in the corner of my living room do not in the least jar in my eyes. Similarly a saint and a seer with a pure heart and clear conscience sees definite signs of the divine presence all around him where nothing but dead matter meet my eyes.

God is beyond the reach of senses even with the aid of forces of nature because the senses can make us conscious of the phenomena only. To reach the reality underlying the phenomenal world is, therefore, beyond their depth, "When from the human heart", says Sir Arthur Eddington, the greatest British Astronomer, "the sky goes up," "What is it all about?" It is no answer to look only at that part of experience which comes to us through certain sensory organs and say it is about atoms and chaos—a universe of fiery globes moving to impending doom—Rather is it about a spirit in



"The greatest thing that human soul ever does is to see something. Hundreds of people can talk for one who thinks but thousands can think for one who can see. To see clearly is poetry, philosophy and religion, all in one"

This seeing about which Ruskin speaks is not however the same as seeing with physical eyes. It is what the Hindu philosophers call "Darsana" and is something quite distinct from the ordinary physical vision. It is a mode of consciousness which is much higher than that of senses, the imagination and the intellect individually. It is this mode of direct approach of the soul to the reality which is called spiritual insight and which is attained. 'When the powers of the mind are fused and unified, overbrimmed and revitalized by intense mystical concentration and unification' and the whole interior self becomes an immensely heightened organ of spiritual apprehension is correspondence with the real world to which it belongs"

But it is not God alone who is incomprehensible by mind and senses. "Just as impossible is it, too to arrive at the meaning and significance of beauty or love or goodness by methods of description or by causal explanations. No process of analysis, no piling up of descriptive accounts, no reversion to antecedent causes brings us any nearer to what we mean by beauty, goodness, or love. And yet nothing is more real, nothing is more certain, nothing is more

significant to us than any one of these so-called intrinsic values

There are three ways of acquiring knowledge namely sense experience reasoning and intuitive apprehension Through senses we know the outer characters of objects such as colour, shape heaviness etc The data supplied by the senses are then worked upon by reason which by process of analysis and synthesis gives us the conceptual picture of the external world Obviously the knowledge thus gained through mind by the application of logic is indirect and symbolic in character It depends for its accuracy in the correctness of perceptions as well as on the growth and experience of human mind It is useful knowledge no doubt as it enables us to control the working of our physical environment But it is not enough to give us an adequate apprehension of the real nature of things It is of the type of opinion and as such its soundness depends on the mental capacity and interests of the individual who holds that opinion While all men may therefore have more or less the same knowledge about the density the colour the shape and other outer characters of an object as perceived by the senses, they may not have the same mental picture of it.

Besides the sense perceptions give us a direct information, however inadequate and superficial of the object as a whole while the picture presented by the reasoning faculty is one not of the whole but

of its different aspects which however wide and comprehensive they may be cannot in the very nature of things be as comprehensive as the totality of the object. The symbolic character of the mental picture is also a factor which stands in the way of its right and adequate apprehension. We understand a thing when we can explain its action or appearance in terms with which we are already familiar. These terms serve as symbols and cannot in their very nature take the place of the object however efficiently they may approach it in analogy and actual working. A wooden bow may and does give us an idea of the appearance of the natural phenomenon which it is supposed to report but it cannot lead us to the apprehension of the real nature of the glorious phenomenon. It is only a symbol for the reality and as such cannot be its substitute. A rainbow may be conceived as the bow of a God, it may also be conceived as a series of spectrum colours produced by the rays of the sun passing through water drops but either of the pictures is a matter of opinion and a mental reflection of the reality without being a reality itself.

A beautiful expression of the same idea is given by BASIL BANYAN in his article, "The Quest of the Soul for Beauty," as reported in "Great Thoughts" of September, 1932. Here is a short paragraph from the above article —

"One of the arrestive contrasts of life is this—its unmeasured wealth and the poverty of our possessions. Impinging close upon our life there are

the vast worlds of literature and science, with their rare treasures and music with her infinite fascinations and yet we go on in unromantic way so often blind to all their splendour and missing their many-coloured joys. The vision is there but we do not see it, the music is ringing in our ears, but our soul does not answer to its witchery. Some obstinate limitation shuts us in, some remediable defects imprison us so we lose the lilt that should be in our steps the light fades out of our eyes and joy does not make her home in our heart. Life is so sadly impoverished, we live so much below the level on which we ought to move. One of the greatest things that could happen to us would be to win the open eye and the sensitive ear, the capacity to apprehend how wealthy the world is in which we live.

In the light of the above quotation it is clear that with the necessary training and development of our spiritual faculties of love, beauty, and goodness we can live in the constant presence of our God who plays with us in our childhood, shares our ambitions and responsibilities in our youth and joins us in our meditations when we grow old.

He is the life of the life force it is He who energises the cosmic energy which is at the bottom of all that is happening in nature.

In the words of SRI AUROBINDO GHOSH, "The world is a cyclic movement (SANSAR) and the divine consciousness in Space and Time. Its law and in a sense, its object is progression, it exists by movement and would be dissolved by cessation of movement.

But the basis of this movement is not material, it is the energy of active consciousness which, by its motion and multiplication in different principles (different in appearance, the same in essence) creates oppositions of unity and multiplicity, divisions of Time and Space, relations and groupings of circumstances and causality. All these things are real in consciousness but only symbolic of the Being, somewhat as the imaginations of a creative mind are true representations of itself, yet not quite real in comparison with itself, are real with a different kind of reality."

Uptill very recently the world we live in was believed to be a lifeless machine which worked with material atoms as its parts. We, now, however, know better and physicists tell us that the whole machinery of nature with the cosmic energy which makes it work is only symbolic of a higher reality which underlies it.

It is this ultimate something to which the author alludes and to which even the apparent source of the universal motion, the cosmic energy, owes its existence. In the words of Sir Francis Young-husband.\*

The universe is a grand rhythm, a rhythmic wave-like rise and fall. 'As one planet was rising to the apex of development another would have passed the apex and begun to decline. But always someone, some-

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\*Hibbert Journal, January, 1933)

when would be at the crest of development and always someone somewhere at the trough. Through all the flux and unending change there would always remain the enduring background of the cosmic spirit from which all activities would be derived and which would remain the same yesterday, today and for ever."

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### THAT STANDING PASSES BEYOND OTHERS AS THEY RUN

The idea that the ultimate reality is unfathomable by human faculties individually is beautifully brought out in the following verses of Kabir as translated by Dr Rabindra Nath Tagore and quoted by Dr Radha Krishnan in his Hibbert Lecture for 1929 —

"There is endless world O my brother and there is the nameless Being of whom nought can be said. Only he knows it who has reached that region. It is other than all that is heard and said. No form, no body, no length, no breadth is seen there. How can I tell you that which it is ?

Brahman is stable, immutable and infinite while everything else we see in the world is in motion. This motion, however, is not purposeless. In the words of Sir Arthur Eddington, "Whatever justification at the source we accept to vindicate the reality of the external world it can scarcely fail to admit on the same footing much that is outside physical science. I would rather put it that any

raising of the question of reality in its transcendental sense (whether the question emanates from the world of physics or not) leads us to a perspective from which we see man not as a bundle of sensory impressions, but conscious of purpose and responsibilities to which the external world is subordinate. From this perspective we recognise a spiritual world alongside the physical world."

"Progress towards an understanding of the non-sensory constituents of our nature is not likely to follow similar lines, and indeed is not animated by the same aims. If it is felt that this difference is so wide that the phrase spiritual world is a misleading analogy, I will not insist on the term. All I would claim is that those who in the search for truth start from consciousness as a seat of self-knowledge with interests and responsibilities not confined to the material plain, are just as much facing the hard facts of experience as those who start from consciousness as a device for reading the indications of spectroscopy and micrometers."

There is thus a definite purpose to which we are all being led by the cosmic forces and there is also a reality of which the whole of the world stuff with its manifold activities is symbolic. But what this purpose and this reality is, it is impossible for the material forces at our command to discover. It is these sensual, material and mental forces which are designated by the word gods in Upanishad. These gods have given us our physical science no doubt,

it is with their help that we have been able to bring into order a regular host of apparently unrelated phenomena. It is with the help of these gods also that we can make predictions that come off true. But, however efficient these material and mental forces may be in dealing with matter and its laws and however quick their discoveries in the domain of physical science with their running ever so fast they have failed to reach the one who though standing is still ahead of them. To quote Sir Arthur Eddington again, 'Descriptions of the phenomena of atomic physics have an extraordinary vividness. We see the atoms with their girdles of circulating electrons darting hither and thither, colliding and rebounding. Free electrons torn from the girdles hurry away a hundred times faster curving sharply round the atoms with side slips and hair breadth escapes. The truants are caught and attached to the girdles and the escaping energy shakes the ether into vibrations. E-rays impinge on the atoms and toss the electrons into higher orbits. We see electrons falling back again, sometimes by steps sometimes with a rush caught in a cul-de-sac of metastability, hesitating before 'forbidden passages. Behind it all the quantum regulates each change with mathematical precision. This is the sort of picture that appeals to our understanding no insubstantial pageant to fade like a dream.

The spectacle is so fascinating that we have perhaps forgotten that there was a time when we

wanted to be told what an electron is. The question was never answered. No familiar conceptions can be woven round the electron. It belongs to the waiting list. Similarly the description of the process must be taken with a grain of salt. The tossing up of the electron is a conventional way of depicting a particular change of state of the atom which cannot really be associated with movements in space as microscopically conceived. Some thing unknown is doing we don't know what that is what our theory amounts to." "We can grasp the tune but not the player." Trinculo might have been referring modern physics in the words, "This is the tune of our catch, played by the picture of Nobody."

It will thus be seen that it is only the outer character of the external world that our senses help us to see and it is only an incomplete view of the reality which our intellects and minds enable us to conceive. While the senses supply us with the knowledge of visible qualities of objects, the logic by the processes of analysis and synthesis systematises this knowledge and helps us to handle and control the working of these objects. Senses supply us with the data, intellect gives us the explanations of what the senses perceive. Both, however, are confined to the external appearance of the objects and fail to take us to their very heart, while the data supplied by the senses are superficial, the explanations given by the mental faculties are only symbolic in character. As symbols used by intellect to explain

the perceived reality are anything but the reality it is obvious that knowledge gained through intellect cannot be true knowledge. Besides, man is not mind alone. He is feelings emotions and will as well. And the use of mental and intellectual faculties alone for the apprehension of reality is not therefore adequate for the attainment of the aim in view. When asked what is spirit, the reply of the Upanishad is "It is none of what we see in the phenomenal world of matter and force nor is it the vital organisation will or the mind but it is something which underlies them all, which creates them and which thus forms the basis of their being and background."

Professor William James the famous American Psychologist bears testimony to the fact of mind's inability to comprehend fully the nature of the spiritual reality by his own personal experience in the following inimitable words\* —

Writing to his wife in 1898, a mystical experience which occurred to him in the Aderomdacks one night, when he was working on his Gifford lecture which afterwards constituted *Varieties of Religious Experience*, calls it holding an indescribable meeting in his breast with the minor gods of the inner life. He speaks of "its intensive significance, its everlasting freshness, 'its intense appeal' and then he concludes 'In point of fact I can't find a single word for all that significance and don't know what it was significant of so there it remains, a mere boulder of impression'".

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\* *Pathways to the reality of God* by Rufus M. Jones P. 2

A western mystic who has been described the most subtle and original spiritual writer in the English language penned his spiritual experiences in the early second half of the fourteenth century in the following significant words — "Nothing remains of thy working mind but a naked intent, stretching unto God, not clothed in any special thought of God how He is in Himself or in any of His works but only that He is as He is"

The ultimate reality is thus something which can be felt but cannot be logically proved. It is, therefore, an object of faith. The mystic, the Rishi, and the prophet believe in its existence because they see it all around themselves and as it has been rightly said, "live move and have their being in it". Even the scientist who only yesterday believed his senses and his logic to be the only instruments for the discovery of the highest truths is nature, today has learnt a different lesson as the result of closer study of himself and of the nature around him. Today he sees a definite purpose to which all nature is moving. Today he thinks it essential to have faith not only in the purpose and the unseen hand which is constantly guiding the material universe to achieve the purpose but to have faith as the essential prerequisite even for the discovery of material laws. Thus James Murphy, a well known living scientist writing about Professor Max Planck the author of the quantum theory in his introduction to "Where is Science going", says —

"He (Prof Max Planck) has said that the inscription on the gate of the temple of science indicating

condition on which alone her devotees may enter is — You must have faith. Running through all his work and all that he has said or says there is always this golden thread of a living faith in the ultimate purpose of creation."

The following lines from the stenographic report of the conversation held between Professors Einstein, Max Planck and James Murphy as given in "*Where is Science going?*" also emphasises the need of faith in the apprehension of all truth whether spiritual or material in Prof. Max Planck's own words —

PLANCK —

"The churches appear to be unable to supply that spiritual anchorage which so many people are seeking. And so the people turn in other directions. The difficulty which organised religion finds in appealing to the people nowadays is that its appeal necessarily demands the believing spirit or what is generally called faith. In all round state of scepticism this appeal receives only a poor response. Hence you have a number of prophets offering substitute wares."

MURPHY —

"So you think that science in this particular might be a substitute for religion?"

PLANCK —

Not to a sceptical state of mind for science demands also the believing spirit. Anybody who has been seriously engaged in scientific work of any

kind realizes that over the entrance to the gates of the temple of science are written the words "Ye must have faith" It is a quality which the scientists cannot dispense with'

"The man who handles a bulk of results obtained from an experimental process must have an imaginative picture of the law that he is pursuing. He must embody this in an imaginary hypothesis. The reasoning faculties alone will not help him forward a step, for no order can emerge from that chaos of elements unless there is the constructive quality of mind which builds up the order by a process of elimination and choice. Again and again the imaginary plan on which one attempts to build up that order breaks down and then we must try another. This imaginative vision and faith in the ultimate success are indispensable. The pure rationalist has no place here."

"These stories circulate in regard to nearly everybody whose name is before the public. As a matter of fact, Kepler is a magnificent example of what I have been saying. He was always hard up. He had to suffer disillusion after disillusion and even had to beg for the payment of the arrears of his salary by the Reichstag in Regensburg. He had to undergo the agony of having to defend his own mother against a public indictment of witchcraft. But one can realise, in studying his life, that what rendered him so energetic and tireless and productive was the profound faith he had in his own science, not the



by our human powers of mental conception, but we can perceive its harmony and beauty as we struggle towards an understanding of it '.

"Not only that, but we must admit as certain the truth that the absolute can never finally be grasped by the researcher. The absolute represents an ideal goal which is always ahead of us and which we can never reach. This may be a depressing thought, but we must bear with it. We are in a position similar to that of a mountaineer who is wandering over uncharted spaces, and never knows whether behind the peak which he sees in front of him and which he tries to scale there may not be another peak still beyond and higher up. Yet it is the same with us as it is with him. The value of the journey is not in the journey's end but in the journey itself."

"As to the first point, that about the discovery of new mysteries. This is undoubtedly true. Science cannot solve the ultimate mystery of nature. And that is because, in the last analysis, we ourselves are part of nature and therefore part of the mystery that we are trying to solve."

PLANCK —

Of course it is clear. There is no doubt whatsoever that the stage at which theoretical physics has now arrived is beyond the average human faculties, even beyond the faculties of the great discoverers themselves. What, however, you must remember is that even if we progressed rapidly in

the development of our powers of perception we could not finally unravel nature's mystery "

' Yes, we are always being brought face to face with the irrational. Else we couldn't have faith. And if we did not have faith but could solve every puzzle in life by an application of the human reason what an unbearable burden life would be. We should have no art and no music and no wonderment. And we should have no science not only because science would thereby lose its chief attraction for its own followers namely, the pursuit of the unknowable—but also because science would lose the corner stone of its own structure, which is the direct perception by consciousness of the existence of external reality. As Einstein has said you could not be a scientist if you did not know that the external world existed in reality, but that knowledge is not gained by any process of reasoning. It is a direct perception and therefore in its nature akin to what we call Faith. It is a metaphysical belief. Now that is something which the sceptic questions in regard to religion but it is the same in regard to science '.

' Science as such can never really take the place of religion.

## 5TH 'MANTRA'

तद्वजति तन्नैजति तद्दूरे तद्वदन्तके ।

तदन्तरस्य सर्वस्य तद्गु सर्वस्यावाह्यता ॥५॥

“That moves and that moves not that is far and the same is near that is within all this and that also is outside all this ”

“There is an eternal reality’ says Plato in the symposium, forever haunting us with its presence, which transcends any finite experience of it—an Eternal Beauty that neither waxes nor wanes but at the same time finite objects, beautiful faces, beautiful souls, fair forms, noble creations, and lofty actions are windows through which the human soul here in a world of mutability catches glimpses of that Eternal Beauty,—is fused and kindled with a passion of love for it and beholds through the finite window of here and now the infinite Beauty that is both here and yonder ”

In continuation of 4th ‘MANTRA’, this ‘MANTRA’ also asserts all pervasiveness of God and declares that the same reality that in essence is one stable, immutable, “ISH”, manifests itself in the ever-changing phenomenal world also Motion implies change As manifested in the phenomenal world He moves because it is He who is at the bottom of all cosmic activity But this does not mean that



the primary position According to this latter school of thought existence in this world is a snare and a meaningless burden imposed inexplicably on the soul by itself which must be cast aside as soon as possible

Both of these schools of thought attempt to solve the enigma of life but they do so by cutting the gordian knot violently Each one of them looks at only one side of the picture and is thus either for the phenomenal world or for the world of ideas and ideals The solution offered by the Upanishad on the other hand aims at reconciling these two extreme views and gives a philosophy which is based upon synthesis rather than analysis In the inimitable words of Sri Anurobindo Ghosh, "The Upanishad tries instead to get hold of the extreme ends of the knot, disengage and place them along side of each other in a release that will be at the same time a right placing and relation It will not qualify or subordinate unduly any of the extremes, although it recognises a dependence of one on the other Renunciation is to go to the extreme but also enjoyment is to be equally integral, Action has to be complete and ungrudging, but also freedom of the soul from its works must be absolute, unity utter and absolute is the good but this absoluteness has to be brought to its highest term by including in it the whole infinite multiplicity of things "

Another principle asserted by this MANTRA is *that* of all pervasiveness of God, a truth which has taken

humanity centuries to understand and which has not been realized even upto now by the orthodox sections of even some of the most widely spread religions of the world. According to the sometic religions for example, God has his abode in the 7th Heaven from which exalted position He governs the world through the agency of angels. It is, however not my business here to controvert this view nor is it necessary to do so as enlightened opinion is already asserting itself against this view even in the most backward sections of the religious world

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### HE IS FAR AND THE SAME IS NEAR

God is all pervading and is thus both far and near. Taken in a different sense, however he is far from those who are of materialistic attitude of mind. These people identify themselves with the flesh and thus forget their true selves. God is therefore too far away from them to be seen. When however stripped of all that is extraneous to the soul they recognise their kinship with the universal spirit then they live in the constant presence of God and thus for them, in that happy state, He is not far but near. He is therefore far from some and near to others. Or to put it differently, He is far from one who is materialistically minded but near to the same person when he turns his face from matter to soul. It all depends on one's stage of spiritual development.

Spiritual life thus consists in the restoration of the lost kinship between the individual and the universal soul and can be best attained by the replacement of the individual will by the Divine will in man. This resignation of the self to the Supreme Will only means a progressive attempt at transcendence from the individual to the universal plane and can be best achieved by a strict ethical discipline as well as by the cultivation of what constitutes the whole of the human self, namely intellect, will and emotions through prayer, contemplation and virtuous deeds. Thus to be near the Eternal Source of Purity and Truth and to be able to see it face to face one must become true and pure. A frivolous and restless person who is being tossed about by the eddies and currents of the turbulent stream of material existence cannot hope to be near Him who is the one unchanging Reality underlying this universe of constant change. God is always far from such people. On the other hand a self-collected person who has come into vital touch with the spiritual environment by thorough mastery over himself and by self-resignation to the Divine Will is not only near God but "lives, moves and has his being" in His constant presence. The following passage from Plotinus, quoted in Hibbert Lectures for 1929, gives a vivid description of the happy condition of such a person, "Oftentimes when I awake out of the slumber of the body, and come to a realizing sense of myself, and, retiring from the world outside, give myself up to inward con-

templation I behold a wonderful beauty I believe, then, that I belong to a higher and better world and I strive to develop within me a glorious life and to become one with the godhead And by this means I receive such an energy of life that I rise above the world of things '

The above is a charming picture indeed and is one with which every one of us will naturally like to identify himself but this blissful life cannot be had by merely wishing it. In the inimitable words of Dr Radha Krishnan "Salvation is attained not so much by placating God as by transforming our being, by achieving a certain quality and harmony of the passions through severe self-discipline. The effort is costly. No tricks of absolution or payment by proxy, no greased paths of smooth organs and stained glass windows can help us much. The spirit has to be stripped bare if it is to attain its goal.

"Meditation is the way to self discovery. By it we turn our mind homeward and establish contact with the creative centre. To know the truth we have to deepen ourselves and not merely widen the surface. Silence and quiet are necessary for the profound alteration of our being and they are not easy in our age. Discipline and restraint will help us to put our consciousness into relation with the Supreme. What is called "TAPAS" is a persistent endeavour to dwell in the divine and develop a transfigured life. It is the gathering up of all dispersed

energies, the intellectual powers, the heart's emotions, the vital desires, nay the very physical being itself, and concentrating them all on the supreme goal. The rapidity of the process depends on the intensity of the aspiration, the zeal of the mind for God "

The present verse along with the previous one can also be taken as confessing the inability of human mind to grasp and describe the Great Truth which cannot be understood but can only be experienced. To quote Dr. Radha Kishnan once again

"Hinduism admits that the unquestionable content of the experience is *that* about which nothing more can be said. The deeper and more intimate a spiritual experience, the more readily does it dispense with signs and symbols. Deep intuition is utterly silent. Through silence we 'confess without confession', that the glory of spiritual life is inexplicable and beyond the reach of speech and mind. It is the great unfathomable mystery and words are treacherous "

The idea of the inability of man to comprehend mentally the Supreme Reality has also been beautifully expressed in the following inscription on a statue of Isis in the Egyptian city of Sais. "I am all that hath been, and that is and that shall be, and no mortal hath ever raised my veil." Hooker in his *Ecclesiastical Policy* (1-2) observes — "Dangerous it were for the feeble brain of man to wade far into the doings of the Most High, whom although to know be life, and joy to make mention of his

name yet our soundest knowledge is, to know that we know him not as indeed he is neither can know him and our safest eloquence concerning him is our silence, when we confess without confession that his glory is inexplicable, his greatness above our capacity and reach. He is above and we upon earth. Therefore it becometh our world to be wary and few \*.

The Supreme Reality is thus not an object to be understood by human mind. It is on the other hand the very foundation on which all understanding rests and is thus the very condition of knowledge.

To quote once more from the great work of Professor Radha Krishnan \*

‘It is the eternal light which is not one of the things seen but the condition of seeing. The ultimate condition of being, where all dualities disappears where life and death do not matter since they spring from it, where spirit seems to enjoy spirit and reason does not stir can be expressed only in the negative terms. The Upanishad and Samkhya try to express the nature of the ultimate being in negative terms. “The eye goes not thither nor speech nor mind

\* Quoted by Dr Radha Krishnan in *An Idealist View of Life*.

\* *An Idealist View of Life*

## 6TH 'MANTRA'

यस्तु सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मन्येवानुपस्थिति ।

सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं ततो न विजुगुप्सते ॥ ६ ॥

“ Who so seeth all things in the self, and self in every thing, from that he will not hide ”

After affirming in the previous 'MANTRA' the immanence, all-pervasiveness and transcendence of God the Upanishad now declares that the universe with all its apparent multiplicity and discord is really one whole, that all existences are permeated by one spirit, and that if only our eyes could open to this fact of facts we shall find the world around us not a place of strife and struggle but one full of harmony, aglow with fire of love and bright with the light of knowledge As Chandogya Upanishad puts it, He “ is above, below, behind, before, to the right and to the left ” In the inimitable words of Eckhart, “ The reborn soul is as the eye which having gazed into the sun thenceforward sees the sun in every thing ’ ’

George Fox, the famous English preacher also teaches us the same lesson of learning “ to see all things in the Universal Spirit ”

For India this conception of the existence of the Invisible surrounding and permeating the visible,

the Suprasensible sustaining the sensible and the Infinite vitalising the finite is at least as old as the beginning of human spiritual consciousness. In the pregnant words of Sri Aurobindo Ghosh, 'She was alive to the greatness of material laws and forces she had a keen eye for the importance of the physical sciences she knew how to organise the arts of ordinary life. But she saw that the physical does not get its full sense until it stands in right relation to the supra physical she saw that the complexity of the universe could not be explained in the present terms of man or seen by his superficial sight that there were other powers behind other powers within man himself of which he is normally unaware that he is conscious only of a small part of himself that the invisible always surrounds the visible the suprasensible the sensible even as infinity always surrounds the finite \*

The spirit represents itself to human consciousness in two forms, depending on the way in which we look at it. In relation to the animate and inanimate universe it appears to us as reflecting the changes and movements of nature participating in them immersed in the consciousness of the movement and seeing in it its birth and death, increase and decrease, progress and change, as it enjoys the oppositions of pleasure and pain and upholds and controls the action of nature though to the superficial eyes it appears to be governed by it

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\**The Renaissance in India*, p. 10.

\**The Renaissance in India* "

Seen in its essence, however, the spirit is neither born nor does it die. It is immutable and is absolutely free from pain, pleasure, increase, decrease, growth and decay. It stands back from the changes and movements of Nature—calm, pure, impartial, indifferent for watching them and not participating in them, above them as on a summit instead of being immersed in the terrestrial water. This calm Self is like the sky that never moves but looks down upon the waters below that are never at rest.

A man who sees thus God both in relation to the phenomenal world and in His essence it is really he who knows Him and from such a man He never hides himself. Mark the significance of the word *sees* here. It is not thinking, having information of, or talking about that is contemplated in this 'MANTRA' but *seeing*. This seeing, however, is not as simple a matter for us poor mortals as it appears to be at the outset. For one thing it requires cleansing of the whole being—perceptions, conceptions, feelings, will and the intellect. "If the doors of perceptions" says Blake, "were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, infinite." In the inimitable words of Dr. Radha Krishnan "Man, dwelling in the cave of his ignorance bound in the chains of his stupidity and selfishness, takes the shadows thrown upon the farthest walls by the light of his own passions as realities, knows not that God is there, the eternal source of light and life. If his eyes are cleansed up, he will see

the Real Nor is this cleansing of the individual being an easy thing to do It needs courage of the highest order That is why our greatest living Indian poet exclaims ' Give me the supreme courage of love that is my prayer—the courage to speak, to do, to suffer '

' ATMA ' may also mean in this verse the individual as distinguished from the Universal Self And seeing everywhere the ATMA in all existences and all existences in the ATMA ' ' will then mean complete identification of the individual soul with all that exists And verses 5 and 6 taken together may in this case be interpreted thus —

The Supreme Reality which in its essence is one, stable entity entirely free from all the limitations of time, space and laws of causality and which is therefore beyond the reach of human mind and senses, can only be experienced by the individual souls by their complete identification with all that exists Such lucky souls have been described by Sir Francis Younghusband in the *Hibbert Journal* for January 1933, in the following words —

"As ardent patriots glow more fervently with the spirit of their country than the average man of their fellows so would they burn more fiercely with the spirit of the universe Afire with that spirit they would lead a more intense and vivid life than others They would be sensitive to the very faintest valuation of the universe as well as conscious of

its great rolling rhythms, be surely discriminative in choosing what stimulus to accept and what to reject and having selected be much quicker in their response. By no cumbersome categorical reasoning would they reach to true knowledge. Straight and quick as an arrow would they pierce to the heart of each situation and by sure intuition pass clear through knowledge to the finest understanding and wisdom. By no heavy medium would they communicate with the method and knowledge of lovers."

There is yet another aspect from which the significance of this MANTRA ' may be seen. In the early stage of his evolution man identifies himself more or less completely with matter. "PRAKRITI" which he sees, hears and smells is for him the only reality. Actual for him is the real also. He is in one word a materialist. He cannot at this primary state of existence see through the phenomenal world and visualise the Fundamental Reality which underlies all phenomena. The golden cover of matter conceals this reality and does not permit him to see his surroundings in their essence and in their true perspective. Man thus remaining ignorant of his own true self as well as the truth of his surroundings becomes an easy prey to egoistic feelings. He puts himself in opposition to the rest of the world and in course of time repression, shrinking, dislike, fear, hatred, and other similar perversions of feelings take possession of his mentality. Discord, struggle and competition are for him the fundamental laws of

existence. With advancement of consciousness however man begins to see himself and his surroundings as they really are. In course of time physical consciousness gives place to mental and the latter ultimately to spiritual consciousness. It is at this last stage that one sees the spiritual domain in this universe and becomes conscious of the all pervading spirit which is in and beyond the universe. In the inimitable work of Dr. Radhakrishnan he now realises that "The truth of the universe is not a mathematical equation or a kinematical system or a biological adjustment or a psychological pluralism or ethical individualism but a spiritual organism. The lower we descend the more clear may be our knowledge. Mathematical knowledge may be very much clearer than our knowledge of the world as a closed energetic system which may be clearer than a knowledge of it as the environment of life and sentience. The knowledge of ourselves as ethical beings may be much clearer than that of the world as spirit and yet it is this mysterious unclear and inarticulate knowledge that brings us closest to reality."

It is also at this stage of development of the cosmic spiritual sense of man that the Universal Soul instead of shrinking and evading exposes Himself to man's view in all His nakedness. In the inimitable words of Dr. Tagore, for us ordinary men, "Life is a theatre where the eternal love drama of the soul is being staged. To be unconscious of this spiritual existence is like sitting in the theatre with our backs

to the stage where we see the gilded pillars and decorations, we watch the coming and going of the crowd, and when the light is put out at the end we ask ourselves in bewilderment what is the meaning of it all "

As soon as, however, we become conscious of the spiritual domain the reality becomes visible and we exclaim with Sir Arthur Eddington, perhaps the greatest living British astronomer, " When from the human heart the cry goes up, what is it all about, it is no answer to look only that part of the experience which comes to us through certain sensory organs and say it is about atoms—a universe of fiery globes moving to impending doom—rather is it about a spirit in which truth has its shrine with potentiality of self-fulfilment in its responses to duty and right "

There is a correspondence between the outside world and my inner self as shown by the fact that for every event which occurs in the material universe there is a corresponding event within me also. The sun appears in the universe outside me and there is the corresponding sun which illumines my inner being and enables me to see what is invisible to the materialistic eye

Then again the rise of this latter sun on the sky of my consciousness corresponding to the daybreak in the east of material universe shows clearly that the events of the outside world are not independent but are related to me by something which is common to us both and from which the internal and the

external lights emanate That is why the poet says, "Open your eyes and see Feel this world as a living flute might feel the breath of music passing through it It is this feeling of the living touch and seeing of the common soul which enables us to know that which is otherwise unknowable by mind and senses and which to the unenlightened consciousness appear to be only a jumble of opposites "We live says Emerson, "in succession in division in parts in particles Meanwhile within man is the soul of the whole, the wise silence, the universal beauty to which every part and particle is equally related, the eternal one " It is the seeing of this common factor, the universal bond, which makes up the deficiency in us and but for which no amount of physical and mental effort on our part can enable us to see the all pervading spirit. The human eye aided by all the faculties of microscopes and telescopes which the intellect can provide sees or rather seems to think it sees the reality in mountains rivers, sun, the moon atoms etc But as soon as it tries to grasp this so called reality it finds that instead of being the real substance it was only a shadow of reality It evades the grasp and like a shadow the more we pursue it the further it recedes

To quote Sir Arthur Eddington once more, " In the world of physics we watch a shadowgraph performance of the drama of familiar life The shadow of my elbow rests on the shadow table as the shadow ink flows over the shadow paper It is all symbolic, and as a symbol the physicist leaves it. Then comes

the alchemist Mind who transmutes the symbols. The sparsely spread nuclei of electric force become a tangible solid, their restless agitation becomes the warmth of summer, the octave of ethereal vibrations becomes a gorgeous rainbow. Nor does the alchemy stop here. In the transmuted world new significances arise which are scarcely to be traced in the world of symbols, so that it becomes a world of beauty and purpose and, alas, suffering and evil." Thus in the last analysis what we suppose to be real becomes unreal and we are left groping in the dark. Feeling helpless in our search in the near with the aid of microscope we begin our search in the far by relying on telescope but here also we search in vain the starry heaven for a clue of that something which is at the bottom of it all. It is only when physical and mental lives are transcended and spiritual life makes its appearance on the horizon of human personality that consciousness is emancipated and darkness gives place to light.

This spiritual life consists in seeing the spirit in and beyond all existence and thus realising *that* internal and external harmony which being at the root of all true love is opposed to hatred of every kind.

The following passage from "*An Idealist View of Life*" gives a beautiful description of the life of one who has reached this state of self-realization —

"These rare and precious souls, filled with the spirit of the whole, may be said to be world-con-



the night is dark and the stars are hidden and man seems forsaken of all. It is the love that does not expect any reward, return or recompense. It is its own excuse for being. The saints love because they cannot help it. It would be strange not to love."

## 7TH MANTRA

यस्मिन् सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मया भूद्विजानत ।

तत्रका मोहः कः शोकः एकस्यमनुष्यतः ॥७॥

“The stage of self emancipation where all existences have become nothing but the self or spirit for one who has perfect knowledge of things there, where is attachment and where is grief for the person who sees oneness everywhere ?

As has already been remarked the ordinary life of an average man is like that of a bird at the stage of an egg. He has the potentialities of flying in the limitless sky as a free being but this he can only do after the shackles imposed upon him by the shell of the egg have been torn asunder by the growing strength of the inner being in obedience to the laws of its growth. As a bird his home is everywhere and nowhere. He is not confined to any one place nor is his movement limited to any one time. An emancipated soul is thus like a free bird who has broken the shackles of physical life—mind, body, temperament as well as of everything else that was perishable in him and who has come to himself as an immutable existence free from all limits of time and space. At this stage he is one with the universe and all that it contains. When this unity with all existence

has been realised by the individual he becomes a 'VIGIANI,' that is one who has perfect knowledge and true vision of things. Now having identified himself thoroughly with all existences he ceases to see duality and naturally, therefore, he finds nothing with which he may be attached in preference to other things because he is conscious of nothing else except the changeless spirit and also because he is already one with everything else, there being no attachment there can be no disappointment or separation and therefore, no grief resulting from the disappointment or separation.

The word 'ATMA' may be understood in a universal sense also. Atma is pure, invisible being, self-luminous, self concentrated in consciousness, self concentrated in force, self delighted. Its existence is light and bliss. It is timeless, spaceless, and free. Taken in this sense the verse will mean for a 'VIGIANI' the whole universe and all that it contains becomes as it were spiritualized. For him all beings cease to have material aspect. There is nothing which is not spiritual and therefore devoid of bliss, beauty and purity for him. For such a person naturally there can be no duality. He sees nothing but oneness and having this vision of oneness can have no attachment to one thing, rather than another because all things are for him of the same value. There being no attachment there can be no possibility of grief.

The following passage from Hibbert lectures

for 1929 gives a most lucid description of the life of such a person —

Feeling the unity of himself and the universe, the man who lives in spirit is no more a separate and self-centred individual but a vehicle of the universal spirit. He does not shut his eyes to the evil in the world so obvious and obtrusive though nothing can shake his conviction of the oneness of the inward frame. His vision of life is so clear and complete that it lives through day and darkness, beholding the sun with the eye of the soul. He struggles to weave into the fabric of life the vision he sees with his inner spirit. He throws himself on the world and lives for its redemption assured that it backs his dreams. His life burns out in a blaze of sorrow and suffering. He is able to face reverses in life with a mind full of serenity and joy which is the sign of proper fulfilment of function, nature's seal that life's direction is right and secure. For souls of faith, renunciation becomes easy and natural. They walk over thorns with a tread as light as air and a stillness of mind sure of itself. They are great optimists with unlimited faith in the powers of soul. Pessimism is for them disloyalty to the highest they know, a betrayal of the light in them.

It will also be instructive to read in this connection the spiritual experience of a mystic described in the following simple and yet most charming words —

“What happened then? If I could tell *that*,

I should tell a secret indeed But a moment came when the darkness of that ocean changed to light, the cold to warmth when it swept in one great wave over the shores and frontiers of myself, when it bathed me and I was renewed, when the room was filled with a presence and I knew I was not alone—that I never could be alone any more, that the universe beyond held no menace, for I was part of it, that, in some way for which I had sought in vain so many years, I belonged and because I belonged I was no longer I, but something different, which could never be afraid in the old ways or cowardly with the old cowardice”

Attachment and consequent grief thus depend on the attitude of one's mind and the way in which one looks at one's surroundings. Seeing these surroundings as a play of the Reality, which in its essence, is unchanging purity, beauty and bliss and identifying ourselves with this drama of life as active contributors on the cosmic stage, we can always hope for everlasting happiness, free from all possible tinge of grief. On the other hand a materialistic attitude of mind which sees nothing but strife, competition, ugliness and dead inert matter all around can expect nothing but grief as the result of this mentality. Following quotation from the writings of Einstein, one of the greatest, if not the greatest, scientists of the day, brings out the point most clearly —

“Strange is our situation here upon earth

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\*Quoted by Dr Radha Krishnan in his Hibbert lectures for 1929









himself into this organised drama of the ever changing and finite existence which gives a concrete expression to His abstract attributes

Bright' means luminous without any dark bands of ignorance or evil Bodyless means indivisible, imperishable, formless and changeless Without scar means without a defect or imperfection or break and also untouched by anything external and therefore unaffected by it

'Without sinews' means that though active He yet does not require for action aid of material organs In our case our physical system puts out power and dispenses force in multiple channels with the help of organs which depend on food to replenish the lost energy We are thus not independent in maintaining our existence The universal spirit, however, does not need any material organs for existence and action and therefore retains its eternal freedom and eternal purity It is the material part of the universe that undergoes change the Lord which is the underlying Reality simply watches these changes as a dramatist watches the play which he has conceived but which is being staged and dramatised by others He is thus eternally pure and unpierced by evils though inhabiting the universe where evil is seen all round as the result of inharmonious actions and reactions of various kinds As a matter of fact it is ignorance which acting as a veil conceals the true relations between matter, mind, life and spirit and thus limiting its vision pierces the human soul with evil This evil takes various forms, of discord

and suffering consequent upon desire which we human souls feel universally in life. To get rid of these evils the only course open to us is to shake off the ignorance and to identify ourselves with the Divine Inhabitant of the phenomenal universe including human beings instead of confining our interests to the limited world of our own creation. It is only in this way that it can be possible for us to be free from the shackles of matter and to guide its actions and reactions as its Lord instead of being its slave as we now are. In the words of Sri Anubindo Ghosh, "The human soul entangled in mind is obscured in vision by the rushing stream of 'PRAKRITI's' work and fancies itself to be a part of that stream and swept in its torrents and in its eddies. It has to go back in its self-existence to the silent 'PURUṢA' even while participating in its self-being in the movement of Prakṛiti. It becomes, then, not only like the silent 'PURUṢA,' the witness, and upholder, but also the Lord and the free enjoyer of Prakṛiti and her works. An absolute calm and passivity, purity and equality within, a sovereign and inexhaustible activity without, is the nature of Brahman as we see it manifested in the universe."

"There is therefore no objection to works. On the contrary, works are justified by the participation or self-identification of the soul with the Lord in His double aspect of passivity and activity. Tranquility for the soul, activity for the energy, is the balance of the divine rhythm in man."

'KAVI' means a seer, that is, one who sees the truth of things or one who has the right vision of the essence of facts and who sees the truth of possibilities comprehensively and not piece meal. 'MANISHI' is one who thinks out possibilities of things. 'PRIBHU' is he who realizes the truth and possibility of things in their actualities creates forms and gives effect to his thought by these creations in time and space. All the three, namely seeing, thinking, and creating are really one operation though to our relative temporal and spacious consciousness they appear to be successive.

SWATIBHYAH 'SWABHAYA' mean from years semiternal, in perpetual time.

'YATHATATHYATAN' means as they should be in their nature.

'ARTHAN' means totality of objects.

'SWAYAMBHU' is one who is self-existent.

An action to be successful must be based on the balancing of various possibilities and this balancing can be effective only if it is in consonance with the nature of things which are acted upon. The MANISHI or the thinker of a scheme must be a 'KAVI' also because it is the Kavi the seer who has the right knowledge of the law and nature of things.

Similarly for an effective action it must be preceded by the idea and this again by the right knowledge of the nature of the various elements involved in the action.

The truth of things as postulated in this mantra is based on the view of the universe taken from above that is to say, it is based on the view that the universe is a complete whole with a spiritual domain and a spiritual reality underlying it.

This view is what is called the divine angle of vision. It is interesting to compare the above view of our Rishies regarding the nature of Universe with the findings of a large number of the leading scientists of today, who, starting from below instead of looking from above, have studied the whole question by process of generalization of the data gathered piece-meal, by the study of individual objects and events of the phenomenal world. The following quotation from a pamphlet of John Hayes Holmes, the well-known American preacher, gives the most recent scientific view on the subject in a nutshell —

“The whole mechanistic or materialistic approach to life is gone, as one of the gigantic illusions, or superstitions, of the human mind. So at least agree two such prominent scientists of our time as Sir Arthur Eddington, the greatest British astronomer, and Sir James Jeans, one of the great mathematical physicists of the modern world. ‘The day of materialism is over,’ says Professor Eddington. ‘Materialism and determinism, those household gods of nineteenth century science which believed that the world could be explained in mechanical and biological concepts as a well-run machine, must be discarded.’ Professor Jeans agrees with this affirmation. ‘Thirty years ago,’ he writes, ‘we thought



a stick, giving two heads to his image to show infinite wisdom, four arms to show infinite strength. For him that is worship, the best that he can do. One higher in the scale paints a picture as his form of worship, or composes an oratorio. But the ideas of us all, added together since the beginning, would fall far short of the reality." The following quotation from "*An Idealist View of Life*" by Dr. Radha Krishnan, also gives the spirit of this view in a nutshell —

"He is the creative mind of the world, with a consciousness of the general plan and direction of the cosmos, even before it is actualised in space and time. He holds the successive details in proper perspective and draws all things together in bonds of love and harmony. He is the loving saviour, God is transcendent to the true process, even as realisation is transcendent to progress. This internal transcendence of God to the true process gives meaning to the distinctions of value, and makes 'struggle and effort' real. We call the supreme the Absolute, when we view it apart from the cosmos, God in relation to the cosmos. The Absolute is the pre-cosmic nature of God, and God is the Absolute from the cosmic point of view."

## 9TH TO 11TH MANTRAS

अधत्तम प्रविशति ये ऽविद्या मुक्तमग ।

ततो भूय इय म तमा य उ विद्याया २०० ॥६॥

अन्यस्यादृविद्याया अ-व्यादृविद्याया ।

इति पुत्रम योगीनां ये नानद्विचक्षणैः ॥१०॥

विद्याविद्याय यत्तद्वेशमयः ॥११॥

अविद्याया मत्सु तात्पर्याविद्यायामुक्तमनुत् ॥१२॥

### 9th Mantra

Into a blind darkness they enter who follow after the Ignorance, they enter into a greater darkness who follow themselves to the knowledge alone.

### 10th Mantra

Other verily the said is that which comes by the knowledge other that which comes by the Ignorance. This is the lore we have received from the wise who revealed that to our understanding.

### 11th Mantra

'He who knows that as both in one the knowledge and the Ignorance by the ignorance crosses beyond death and by the knowledge enjoys immortality.

'AVIDYA in these 'MANTRAS may mean either want of knowledge or any thing which conceals the reality from our view, such as the phenomenal world. It may also mean that which is not 'VIDYA,' that is

action 'VĪDYA' on the other hand means right knowledge of things and their true relations. Thus 'VĪDYA' is freedom, salvation from the bondage, 'MOKṢHA', and 'AVIDYĀ' is Samsara, phenomenal world and secular life. 'VĪDYA' or 'MOKṢHA' is thus the aim & 'AVIDYĀ', secular life, the means to achieve it. One complements the other and both must go hand in hand for spiritual perfection. To be man of the world alone or to live material life only without having a due regard for the spiritual needs is to live in blind darkness because such a life faces away from the source of life. On the other hand to ignore the phenomenal world altogether and not to care for the requirement of material existence by the exclusive devotion to the pursuit of spirit is to be in greater darkness still, because neither of these two extremes alone leads to true and complete life. In the words of Dr. Sir Radha Kṛṣṇan, "The suppression of any one side mars self-fulfilment. Asceticism is an excess indulged in by those who exaggerate the transcendent aspect of reality. If the real is yonder, in another sphere, and this world is only appearance then the real can be found only by those who turn away from the temporal and the finite. The mystic does not recognise any antithesis between the secular and the sacred. Nothing is to be rejected, everything is to be raised. The perfection aimed at is not the perfection of a void, of a nature whose brain is barren and heart dry. The spiritual is not an essence apart, to be cloistered and protected from the rest of life, but something which pervades and

refines the whole life of man. It cleanses all parts of our inward being and brings about a rebirth of the soul a redemption of our loyalties and a remaking of our personalities. Life puts on immortality and the whole being of man becomes intenser"\*

Among the ancient tendencies of thought which emphasised purely secular life without any reference to the life of spirit may be mentioned Buddhism, while among the modern substitutes of religion which ignore spirit as the basic reality of the universe and which want us to devote ourselves exclusively to life as we find it is Humanism. Therefore Buddhism and Humanism teach nothing but the life of *AVIDYA*.<sup>\*</sup> In the words of Dr Radha Krishnan, "Humanism holds that it does not matter what we think about the ultimate nature of reality if only we are prepared to do the proper thing. Religious theories may be mere speculations. we cannot be sure what is true or whether anything is true at all. Life at any rate is something certain and definite and so let us occupy ourselves with the improvement of life. As regards religion, Humanism contends that the world is our chief interest and perfection of humanity as our ideal." "Humanism, continues Dr Radha Krishnan, "is not to be confused with what is sometimes called the gospel of a good time. In the nature of things some propensities cannot be allowed full play, for when let go they create conditions in which the freedom of self expression is curtailed. Besides, a man is planted in a social environment which imposes limitations on

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\* *An idealist View of Life* page 112.

his life. And these are not felt as a restriction as the individual gets in return a sense of peace and satisfaction." Again "Humanism," continues Dr Radha Krishnan, "seems to be a religion secularised. The self-sufficiency of the natural man, the belief that the only values that matter are human values is the central faith of the Humanists."

If the description given by Dr Radha Krishnan of Humanism is lucid and clear his criticism of this system of thought is equally illuminating. I cannot, therefore, do better than quote in full his remarks on Humanism to show how beautifully he brings out the Upanishadic viewpoint that purely secular life even though led under most reasonable limits of discipline and self-control is not full life and therefore is a life lived in darkness.

"Plato and Aristotle, from whom the faith derives its inspiration are clearly aware that the deeper needs of the soul require to be satisfied. We are not really human if we do not feel that we are related to something that transcends the finite and the conceivable. We want not a mere improvement of the world, but an ideal transfiguration of it. If the humanists regard the enhancement of personality as the chief end of life, our personality cannot be reduced to either physical manhood or economical well-being, or instructed mind, or sensitive conscience. We cannot live up to the full height of our potential being without drawing upon the deeper resources of spirit. The roots of man's

being are in the unseen and eternal, and his destiny is not limited to the duration of his life on earth. Humanism is confessedly rationalistic and ignores elements in life which cannot be dealt with in intellectual terms. There is a story about the visit of an Indian philosopher to Socrates. Aristoxenes reports that Socrates told the Indian stranger that his work consisted in enquiries about the life of men and the Indian smiled and said that none could understand things human who did not understand things divine \*

Dr Radha Krishnan then gives the following quotation in support of his views —

' While I have life and strength I shall never cease from the practice and the teaching of philosophy, exhorting any one whom I meet and saving to him after my manner, you, my friend, a citizen of the great and mighty and wise city of Athens — are you not ashamed of heaping up the greatest amount of money and honour and reputation, and caring so little about wisdom, truth and the greatest improvement of the soul which you never regard or heed at all?' In a recently discovered fragment of one of Aristotle's lost dialogues the inadequacy of mere economic prosperity is well brought out. Be assured that the good of man does not depend upon abundance of possessions, but upon the right inner quality. Not even the body is regarded as in a happy condition, merely because it is decked out in resplendent robes, but only if though wanting in finery

it is well developed and in good health Likewise one should call only that man fortunate whose soul is ethically developed rather than the man who is rich in outward possession and is worth nothing in himself Even a horse is judged by its actual virtues If it is a poor horse, it is not rated higher because it has a gold bit in its mouth and a costly harness on its back "

Dr Radha Krishnan then continues, " Humanism demands a disciplined life and insists on wholeness and harmony But it sets the moral and natural elements of man in sharp opposition It is the essence of the moral will to check the free play of natural impulses and desires If the dualism between man and nature is radical, the ideal of harmony cannot be attained Besides is the controlling will a mere negative check or has it any positive content? If it is the former, it has no content, if it is the latter, whence is its content derived? The higher will in man becomes identified with the spirit in him Without the recognition of such a spiritual centre, which will help us to co-ordinate the variety of unlike elements of which human nature consists, our life will have no integrity "

" In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle lays down the golden mean, a balance between two extremes, as the rule of life He promises a fair share of earthly pleasures for a life of virtuous activity And modern Humanists adopt a similar view. It is not easy to determine what exactly

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\* '*An idealist View of Life*' footnote 2 pages 65

is the mean between too much and too little. What is the course of self respect which steers clear of slavish obsequiousness and arrogant airs? Where does decency lie between ascetic purity and sensual indulgence? When is violence not strength? Between the right and wrong it is not a mere quantitative difference. Aristotle himself admits that it is difficult to hit the mean though easy to miss it. We cannot apply a mere mechanical rule. We must develop a living adjustment a sure test in any concrete case. The difference between mechanical immorality and true virtue is determined by the delicate insight into the realities of the situation. Aristotle recognises that it is only the sense of something stable and unitary beneath the shifting experiences of life that can help us in seeing the right in any context. We must first gain entrance into the kingdom which is not of this world if we want to build it on earth. Enlightened humanism seems to ignore this essentially non worldly character of a truly spiritual life. Again, "Virtue is not a mere balancing or nice calculation."\* It need hardly be added that what has been said about Humanism applies equally to Buddhism which is nothing but Humanism as evolved by the great Indian thinker.

The phenomenal world in which we are born and bred is the manifestation of the universal spirit. The spirit taken in its absolute sense is a quality and therefore a mere abstraction. It is self-existent, self-conscious and bliss. It is a reality

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\* *An idealist View of Life* pages 66-67

no doubt but it is the material and phenomenal world alone which makes this reality an actuality. The quality must be associated with something material before it can find expression. The absolute must find expression through relative. It is, therefore, through this world of matter, life and mind alone that we can comprehend and achieve spiritual reality which underlies it. Secular life or the life of 'AVIDYA' is thus to the spiritual life or life of 'VIDYA' what a road is to its destination. The destination is the goal no doubt and must always be kept in view as an ideal to be reached. But to achieve this ideal and reach this goal it is absolutely necessary that the road be travelled and be taken care of. Both are equally essential. A traveller who centres all his hopes and fears on the road alone and never looks ahead to find out where the road will lead him to is a blind traveller. But still more blind is he who standing at a certain point of the journey has his eyes fixed on the ideal and the goal without taking into account, and without travelling on the road which leads to that goal. The former is certainly nearer his goal though without knowing this and therefore potentially in greater light than the latter who aspires to reach the high altitude without having any knowledge of the ups and downs which lead to it.

Again all phenomenal existence means, change, it is a 'JAGAT' (जगत). In this movement the individual begins at the lowest end of material existence and may, if he so chooses, rise to the highest level of

self-emancipation by transcending gradually the intermediate stages of animal, mental and ethical life. He starts his career as a slave of matter and continues to be so until he achieves freedom. To begin with the forces of nature are his gods and he is their worshipper. By a process of right living, however, he acquires their true knowledge, gradually masters them and thus gains strength with which he can not only defy them but can even make them obedient to his personal needs. This stage of his development he not infrequently confuses with happiness which he believes to consist in the possession of worldly goods. The more of these goods therefore he can command the more he enjoys and greater, therefore, is his attachment to them. Till at last identifying himself completely with the material possessions he begins to depend entirely on them for what little comfort and pleasure he can manage to have in his life. Nature, which he wanted to conquer with his intellect, thus subdues him in the end by its subtle fascination. Instead of being its master he becomes its dependant and therefore its slave.

Complete attachment and devotion to the phenomenal world which has been called by the Upanishads as the life of 'AVIDYA' thus leads one to a state of slavery which is only another name for darkness. But the life of 'AVIDYA' acts on the individual in another way also. As has been said above the whole nature is undergoing constant change. It is a movement and as such is a series

of births and deaths. Now human life being a part of nature must also be subject to the same changes as the rest of nature and must go through all those series of births and deaths to which the rest of nature is subject. It is this continuous change from life to death and from death to life again which in the case of human beings is called the phase of mortality and which is due to the attachment of the individual self to a particular body, life and mind. The dissolution of matter and the apparent demise of the ego which identifies itself with that matter is what is known as death. Death is, therefore, the result of our self-limitation to the material frame of mind and body. It is not the soul that dies but the material body that ceases to exist. 'What is dying?' asks a Western writer and then answers in the following inimitable words in the pages of "*Great Thoughts*" for January, 1933 —

"I am standing on the sea-shore. A ship at my side spreads her white sails in the morning breeze and starts for the blue ocean. She is an object of beauty and I stand and watch her until at length she hangs like a speck of white cloud just where the sea and sky come down to mingle with each other. Then some one at my side says, 'There! She is gone!'

"Gone where? Gone from my sight—that is all. She is just as large in the mast and hull and spar as she was when she left my side, and just as able to bear her load of living freight to the place of destination. Her diminished size is in me

—not in her—and when some one at my side says: 'There ' she is going' there are other eyes that are watching her coming and other voices ready to take up the glad shout. 'There he comes' and that is dying.

The only way to escape the material death is therefore to break through the limitation which however cannot be achieved by running away from it and by shunning it as something undesirable but by a process of gradual development from the material and sensual to the mental and ethical and by transcending this again into the life of the spirit which is the ultimate goal and true consummation of human existence. Let the individual differ for in the interests of his true fulfilment work his way up from the lowest rung of the ladder to the highest point transcending each intermediate stage as it comes in the way, by living the life of *AVIYA* or solar life but let him not stop here. On the other hand he must remember all the time as he slowly and gradually pushes his way up the ladder that he is leading his life with the definite object and that though he is associating himself however closely with the material and mental forces by studying, discussing and utilizing them, he himself is not material in essence. That his real self is the master and not the slave of nature, and his true interest lies in utilizing nature and all its resources for the only end of fulfilling himself in the spiritual life of truth, beauty, goodness and love. In the words of Sri Aurobindo Ghosh —

" The first necessity is therefore for man continually to enlarge himself in being, knowledge, joy, power in the limits of the ego so that he may arrive at the conception of something which progressively manifests itself in him in these terms and becomes more and more powerful to deal with the oppositions of 'PRAKRITI' and to change, individually more and more terms of ignorance, suffering and weakness into the terms of knowledge, joy and power and even death into means of wider life "

" This self-enlargement has then to awaken to the perception of something exceeding itself, exceeding the personal manifestation Man has so to enlarge his conception of self as to see all in himself and himself in all (verse 6) He has to see that this " I " which contains all and is contained in all, is the One, is universal and not his personal ego To that he has to subject his ego That he has to reproduce in his nature and become That is what he has to possess and enjoy with an equal soul in all its forms and movements "

Not is this enlargement of the individual self and its emancipation from the clutches of matter an easy thing to achieve It needs huge effort on the part of the ego That is why the Upanishad has already warned us to put forth our best all through our earthly term of life of hundred years and more It is not by wishing it, nor is it by talking or thinking about it, that we can attain to immortal life No, the path to immortality lies through mortal existence, through a life of struggle, hardship and

responsibility—a life of 'AVIDYA' to use the Vedio terminology

There is yet another aspect from which the distinction between VIDYA and AVIDYA can be studied. Knowledge can be acquired through senses, intellect and intuition. Gained through senses and intuition it is direct while that obtained through intellect is inferential. While however intuitive knowledge means complete knowledge of the object itself—its true nature and uniqueness—that acquired through senses is superficial and the one gained through the intellectual process of analysis is inasmuch as it is more of the relation of the object to other objects rather than that of its nature and individuality. This latter knowledge is no doubt useful for inferential ends by enabling us to control the physical environment which surrounds us but as an apprehension of the reality of the object under study it is anything but true and adequate. It may therefore be called AVIDYA. True knowledge or VIDYA on the other hand can only be acquired by the complete identity of the the human personality as a whole with the object. It is the result of the creative effort of the complete man in whom thought, feeling and Will are fused into a whole. The means for acquiring VIDYA' therefore include the use of intellect which prepares the way for attainments of 'VIDYA

It is in this sense that intuition is not contrary to intellect and it is in this sense also that 'AVIDYA' or knowledge gained through intellect alone is preparatory to the acquisition of true complete knowledge, which is 'VIDYA'

## 12TH TO 14TH MANTRAS

अन्धतमः प्रविशन्ति ये संभूति मुपासते ।

ततो भूय इव ते तमीय उ संभूत्या श्रुताः ॥१२॥

अन्यदेवाहु सम्भवादन्यदाहुर सम्भवात् ।

इति शुश्रुम धीराणां येनस्तद्विचक्षिरे ॥१३॥

सम्भूतिञ्च विनाशञ्च यस्तद्वेदोभयश्रुह ।

विनाशेन मृत्युं तीर्त्वा सम्भूत्या ऽमृतमश्नुते ॥१४॥

### 12th 'MANTRA'

"Into a blind darkness they enter who follow after the Non-Birth, they as if into a greater darkness who devote themselves to the birth alone,"

### 13th 'MANTRA' :

"Other, verily, it is said is that which comes by the Non-Birth, Other that which comes by the Birth, this is the lore we have received from the wise who revealed That to our understanding"

### 14th 'MANTRA'

"He who knows That as both in one, the Birth and the Dissolution of Birth, by the dissolution crosses beyond death and by the Birth enjoys immortality"

The entry of the individual soul into various states of existence in succession of time is called Birth Being a part of nature which is nothing



Neither of them is the perfect way because all attachment originates from and ends in ignorance which is nothing but a state of blind darkness. If we aspire after and devote ourselves exclusively to the pursuit of Non-Birth simply because the State of Birth does not give us unmixed enjoyment, we are running away from existence, however painful, into its opposite which can be no other than non-existence, a condition which has been rightly called the very night of negative consciousness or blind darkness. This is obviously not a very desirable ideal to have.

The other alternative, namely attachment to Birth, is even worse than Non-Birth because attachment to Non-Birth leads to avoid a condition of dormant existence or non-consciousness, from which the soul may recover sooner or later. But attachment to Birth indicates a perpetual contentment with the state of blindness without any impulse for release.

Happily there is a third alternative also which the Upanishad considers to be the perfect way leading to immortal life and eternal happiness. According to this third alternative the ideal to be achieved should be neither Birth nor Non-Birth alone but starting from the state of Birth which implies the self-limitation in time and space to strive after and achieve that liberty which means tranquil poise of conscious and blissful existence. Birth and Non-Birth are thus to be understood as the beginning and end of soul's journey to self-fulfilment, or rather as

Dr Radha Krishnan happily puts it, "Being and non being are aspects of one concrete movement seen from two points of view. At one end there is being; at the other non being, but the real is neither pure being nor pure non being, but a concrete becoming. Mere being and mere non being as understanding takes them are meaningless. The opposites are mutually dependent though antagonistic movements of the real becoming and their unending strife constitutes the genius of creation. The process of becoming is either being in the act of overcoming non being or non being in the act of overcoming being. This overcoming is never at an end for were it over complete, were there not a non being for being to overcome or being for non being to overcome, there would result either pure being or pure non being which are both meaningless abstractions. The world process is a strife of the two, and can be truly conceived only by thinking out completely the mutual indispensibility of the concepts whose seeming negation of each other expresses the aspect of strife in the real."

According to this view each of the two tendencies pursued with a clear perception of their relative values has its own advantage. It is through Birth and Birth alone that man can learn to lead larger and fuller life and thus achieve the self-enlargement which enables him to cross death. On the other hand the opposite tendency ceasing to be born in body supplies the necessary urge for freedom. One tendency is therefore complimentary to the other.

and both together are essential for a free and divine life. To be attached to Birth with a view to gain pleasure is as undesirable as to pursue Non-Birth with the sole object of avoiding pain. Man must rise above this duality in order that he may come to himself and find his truth. The struggle to free oneself from bondage of a narrow and cramped life of purely self-interest, may at first sight appear to be painful but the fruit of release and consequent nearness to the universal immutable Brahmin will bring about that state of eternal bliss that has no equal in the pleasures enjoyed by the flesh. Immortality can only be attained by the merging of the individual self into the universal soul and this fusion again can only be achieved by continuous efforts through a chain of Births and Deaths. Without Birth, therefore, there can be no Non-Birth. The individual soul must be born to work out his destiny and fulfilment into a state of Non-Birth. The material life of Birth and Non-Birth is not only not to be shunned but has to be lived deeply and broadly before it is transcended into the divine life. Pleasure and pain, be it remembered, as experienced by man, are only reactions of the external environment on his material self. The soul in him is above these reactions and it is through ignorance that he identifies himself with his material body which is only a habitation of his real self.

Besides birth for an individual self is essential as a necessary part of the universal scheme of things also, even though that self has personally attained

the stage of spiritual perfection through self-effort. The following passage taken from Hibbert Lectures for 1929 brings out the point most clearly

"The world process reaches its consummation when every man knows himself to be the immortal spirit the son of God and it is, till this goal is reached, each saved individual is the centre of the universal consciousness. He continues to act with the sense of the ego. To be saved is not to be moved from the world. Salvation is not escape from life. The individual works in the cosmic process no longer as an obscure and limited ego, but as a centre of the divine or universal consciousness embracing and transforming into harmony all individual manifestations. It is to live in the world with one's inward being profoundly modified. The soul takes possession of itself and cannot be shaken off its tranquillity by the attractions and attacks of the world. The spiritual illumination does not make the individual life impossible. If the saved individuals escape literally from the cosmic process, the world would be for ever unredoemed. It would be condemned to remain for all time the scene of unending strife and darkness. The Hindus assert different degrees of liberation, but the complete and final release of all is the ultimate one. Mahayana Buddhism declares that Buddha standing on the threshold of Nirvana took the vow never to make the irrevocable crossing so long as there was a single undelivered being on earth. The Bhagvata Purana

records the following prayer, ' I desire not the supreme state with all its eight perfections nor the release from rebirth . may I assume the sorrow of all creatures who suffer and enter into them so that they may be made free from grief. The self-fulfilment which they aspire to is inconsistent with the failure to achieve similar results in others This respect for the individual as individual is not the discovery of modern democracy, so far as the religious sphere is concerned When the cosmic process results in the revelation of all as the sons of God, when all the Lord's people become prophets, when this universal incarnation takes place, the great cosmic rebirth of which nature strives to be delivered will be consummated "

## 15TH & 16TH MANTRAS

‘हिरण्यमयेन पात्रेण सत्यस्यापिहित मुखम् ।

तत्पुष्पवान्नापावृणु सत्यधर्माय दृष्टय ॥१५॥

पुष्पान्नेकर्पेयम् सूर्य्यं प्राजापत्य व्यूह रश्मीन् समूह ।

तेजो यत्ते रूपं ह्ययाणतमन्तत्ते पश्यामि यो ऽसावसौ पुरुष

सोऽहस्मि ॥१६॥

### 15th ‘ MANTRA ’

“ The face of Truth is covered with a brilliant golden lid that do thou remove, O Fosterer for the law of the Truth, for sight. ’

### 16th ‘ MANTRA ’

‘ O Fosterer, O sole Seer, O Ordainer, O illuminating Sun O power of the Father of creatures, marshal thy rays, draw together thy light, the Lustre which is thy most blessed form of all, that in Thee I behold The PURUSHA there and there, He am I ’

‘ SURYA represents supreme truth and the illumination of that Truth, ‘ AGNI ’ signifies divine will which purifies and perfects human action Spirit is ‘ SAT or pure existence, pure in self awareness (‘ CHIT ) and pure in self-delight (‘ ANAND ) It is the true basis of all conscious being These three qualities are really one Because all pure existence is nothing but pure self conscience in its essence and all pure self-conscience is self-delight.

In the case of human beings the consciousness is broken and divided by time, space and other limitations, which are peculiar to their finite and limited existence. "The light of SURYA, the supreme Truth, either remains imprisoned in the night of the sub-conscious or appears reflective in limited centre with its rays received by these centres and utilised according to their individual nature."

'DRISHTI' is seeing, not conceiving. It is the vision at once of the essence and its image. It is this vision which is the Vedic truth. Intellectual conception, on the other hand, deals with form and determines itself in the form of idea and once determined distinguishes itself sharply from other conceptions. It, therefore, throws light on the form, the image of things and not on their essence. Intellect conceives, spirit sees. Intellectual conception is thus the knowledge of forms which we gain through mind in the light of our spiritual consciousness. Intuition, on the other hand, enables us to see things and their essence with spiritual consciousness directly, without intervention of the medium of human mind. Man is a mental being and the mental percepts and concepts constitute his ordinary means of knowledge. With these percepts and concepts he arranges his knowledge of things as they appear and then tries to infer their true nature by various intellectual processes which are also nothing but working of the limited human mind with all their defects, deformities, prejudices, and potentialities which constitute the golden lid and which hides



in spite of all the obstacles and limitations placed in its way by our egoistic tendencies leads us persistently towards unity and fellowship and thus gives us that clear, pure and true light which alone can enable us to see things and their inter-relations exactly as they are. It is this inner source of life which was the guiding star of our Rishis and which made them see the truth revealed in the spiritual inheritance which has come down to us. This is the 'SURYA,' the divine source of light which needs to be fulfilled and which can integrate and unify his divided self-perception. It is only when man sees himself in the light thus bestowed upon him that he can exclaim truly "that I am."

---

### 'THAT I AM'

That the self of man is the same in essence as the Supreme spirit has been universally affirmed by all those who had the necessary vision to see things as they really are. "In the spiritual experience itself," writes the famous author of "*An Idealist View of Life*," "the barriers between the self and the ultimate reality drop away. In the moment of its highest insight, the self becomes aware of an omnipresent spirit of which it is, as it were, a focussing. We belong to the real and the unreal is mirrored in us. The great text of the Upanishad affirms it—"TAT TVAM ASI" (That art thou). It is a simple statement of an experienced fact



## 17TH & 18TH 'MANTRAS'

वायुरनिलममृतमथेदं भस्मान्तं शरीरम् ।

ओं क्रनो स्मर कृतं श्च स्मर क्रनो स्मरकृतं श्च स्मर ॥१७॥

अग्ने नय सुप्रथा राये अस्मान् विज्वानि देव वयुनानि विद्वान् ।

युयोध्यस्मज्जुहुराण मेना भूयिष्ठान्ते नम उक्तिं विधेम ॥१८॥

### 17TH 'MANTRA'

"The Breath of things, is an immortal Life, but of this body ashes are the end Om' O Will, remember, that which was done remember' O Will, remember that which was done remember'

### 18TH 'MANTRA'

"O Agni, knowing all things that are manifested, lead us by the good path to the felicity remove from us the devious attraction of sin To thee completest speech of submission we would dispose"

### 17TH 'MANTRA'

Body, life and mind constitute the equipment with which the human soul starts its journey of earthly existence Of these the body is material and is therefore perishable It is meant to be an abode of the spirit which is expected to use it as its instrument As soon therefore as the body ceases to be serviceable it is thrown aside to meet

its natural end of dissolution by being reduced to ashes. The life principle on the other hand, which is represented by 'VARU' in this verse survives after the death of the body and accompanies the soul to the end of its journey. As has been rightly said, "Life forms body and is not formed by it. It is the thread upon which the continuity of our successive body lives is arranged, precisely because it is itself immortal. It associates itself with perishable body and carries forward the mental being, the "Parash" in the mind, upon his journey." Whether or not the soul reaches the end of his journey successfully depends on the nature of his activities, his 'KARMA,' as well as on the motive behind these activities. The importance of 'KARMA' cannot thus be exaggerated. In the forcible words of Plato quoted in the Hibbert Lectures for 1929, 'You shall assuredly never be passed over by God's judgment, not, though you make yourself ever so small and hide in the bowels of the earth, or exalt yourself to heaven. You must pay the penalty due, either while you are still with us, or after your departure hence, in the house of Hades, or it may be, by removal to some still more desolate region.' The success or failure of the spiritual pilgrim also depends indirectly on the strength or weakness of the material vital and mental faculties with which it has been supplied.

Ordinarily man lives in the present, caring only for and concentrating his energies on what can arrest his attention for the moment or what appears

to be of immediate interest to his self-limited mind. He thus acts ordinarily only in the living present without regulating his future conduct in the light of past experiences. He is unconscious of the fact that all acts leave their stamp on the character of the individual self and make him what he is. For be it remembered we are not the result of a capricious fate nor are our lives at the mercy of the blind forces. On the other hand, every single thought, word or deed acts as an additional ring to the chain of causes and effects which determine our destiny. In the inimitable words of Dr. Radha Krishnan, "Karma is not so much a principle of retribution, as one of continuity. Good produces good, evil evil, Love increases our power of love, hatred our power of hatred. It emphasizes the great importance of right action. Man is continuously shaping his own self. The law of Karma is not to be confused with either a hedonistic or a juridical theory of rewards and punishments. The reward for virtue is not a life of pleasure nor is the punishment for sin pain. Pleasure and pain may govern the animal nature of man but not his human. Love which is a joy in itself suffers, hatred too often means a perverse kind of satisfaction. Good and evil are not to be confused with material well-being and physical suffering."

We care only for the immediate interest. Introspection or farsightedness does not appeal us. Man, shortsighted as he is, forgets that his past actions have made him what he now is and his future will

depend on what he is doing at present. "The only lesson" says a European Philosopher, "which History teaches is that man has learnt nothing from History. This dictum is as true about individuals as it is about nations. Neither nations learn from their collective experience which is embodied in their respective histories nor do the individuals utilise their past personal experiences to mould advantageously the future course of their lives.

But past experience, however, useful in other ways is not sufficient guidance for future actions. The experience gained by past 'KARMA' must for this purpose be supplemented by the lights of the guiding stars of ideals. It is therefore absolutely necessary that for a successful pilgrimage of life one must learn to control and co-ordinate his actions in the light of the past experiences as well as under the stimulus of the end to be achieved.

The whole discussion then boils down to this, For safe steering to the Harbour of peace we need constantly bear in mind three things, namely, (1) the fact that our bodies are mere instruments for work in this life and that they are to be thrown away into the dust heap as soon as they cease to be serviceable, (2) fundamental importance of 'KARMA', past, present and future, as essential for requirements of safe steering. It must never be forgotten that these 'KARMA' may take the form of reading the compass or of taking the soundings just to know, as we go along, how much water there is under our keel but

they are not a thing of transitory nature In the words of Oliver Wendell Holmes, "To reach the port of Heaven we must sail and not drift or lie at anchor" And lastly (3) along with actions we must also remember God the great 'Om' to see whom face to face is our goal Let us also see to it that the ship moves and does not lie at anchor We must not always be looking for, "A wet-sheet and a flowing sea, and a wind that follows fast" On the other hand there are times when we must sail close-hauled and beat to wind-ward as best as we can" In other words we must not be governed by circumstances, but rather use them to further our best endeavours While, however, motion is essential for steering it is not always safe to lean unto our own understanding Our enthusiasm coupled with imagination as well as experience may supply us with the search light for guidance but we must remember that search light is no use in a fog In such circumstances faith in God is the only rational thing that supplies the necessary guidance Constantly remembering Him, therefore, is as essential for safe steering as anything else As has been rightly said, "The art of life is not a barren rehearsal of stale parts Mere mechanical observance of rules or imitation of models will not take us far" For real progress through life we need grasp of the position for which spiritual insight is absolutely necessary and this can only be attained by complete fusion of human personality with the universal Soul Our acts must, therefore, be performed in the light of the

deepest level of man's being and must be guided by the constant presence, before our mental eyes, of One who is the source of all that is good and great. Acts are essential but these actions should consist in the adaptation of the divine into human. Our souls do not belong to the same category of reality to which matter does. They have their own specific nature. They are connected with the past by their 'KARMAS' and have the additional feature of freedom to choose any course of life for future. For making the right choice and the right use of freedom it is of necessity that the source of all true knowledge and all true inspiration be constantly kept in mind.

The author of the Upanishad solemnly reminds the pilgrim therefore that his body is not his real self; it is a means to an end and is to be thrown aside into the dust heap as soon as it ceases to be an effective instrument for achieving the end in view. The Upanishad also emphasizes the fact that for a successful journey through life man must mind and constantly keep in view two things: namely, his actions both past and present and the ideal to be attained as the result of these activities. We must remember that it is only a conscious control and co-ordination of his activities that can lead man to that identification of the individual with the universal self which is his true goal. Let us ever remember God, the Om as the be all and end all of our ambitions, and at the same time never forget that the only approach to this sublime ideal is through a complete submission of the

individual to the divine will as expressed in his actions

### 18th 'MANTRA'

Just as 'SURYA' represents the divine light so 'AGNĪ' represents divine energy which combines in itself both the light and the will to work. Man being confined to his egoistic limits does not possess that all vision which alone can enable him to see his way through life clearly. He has in the very nature of things, therefore, to make his way in this earthly career in divided and shifted light. Under the circumstances it is but natural that he should make mistakes and fail to follow in very many cases the straight path of love and harmony which alone can lead him to eternal beatitude. In the words of the eminent Indian scholar who has already been quoted so many times "Man follows in his aims and in his methods a knowledge that is personal, governed by desire, habits of thought, obscure subconscious impulses or, at best, a broken partial and shifting light. He lives by rays and not in the full blaze of the Sun. His knowledge is narrow in its objectivity, narrow in its subjectivity is neither one with the integral knowledge and the total working and total will in the universe. His action, therefore, is crooked, many branching, hesitating and fluctuating in its impulsion and direction, it beats about among falsehoods to find the Truth, to see or scrapes among errors and sins to find the right. Being neither one-visioned nor whole-

visioned having neither the totality of the universal nor the concentrated oneness of the transcendent, the individual Will cannot walk straight on the right or good path towards the Truth and the Immortality.

'Covered by desire, exposed to the shock of the forces around it with which its egotism and ignorance forbid it to put itself in harmony, it is subject to the twin children of the ignorance suffering and falsehood. Not having the divine Truth and Right, it cannot have the divine Felicity.

To quote the above author once more, 'But as there is in and behind all the falsehood of our material mind and reason a Light that prepares by this twilight the full dawn of the Truth in man, so there is in and behind all our errors, sins and stumblings a sacred Will tending towards Love and Harmony, which knows where it is going and prepares and combines our crooked branchings towards the straight path which will be the final result of their toil and seeking. The emergence of the Will and Light are conditions of immortality.

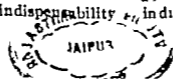
This Will is Agni, Agni is in the Rig Veda, from which the closing verse of the Upanishad is taken, the flame of the Divine Will or Force of Consciousness working in the worlds. He is described as the immortal in mortals, the leader of the journey, the divine Horse that bears us on the road, the "Son of crookedness" who himself knows and is the straightness and the Truth. Concealed and hard

to seize in the workings of this world because they are all falsified by desire and egoism he uses them to transcend them and emerge as the universal in man or universal Power, Agni Vaisvanaire, who contains in himself all the gods and all the world, upholds all the universal workings and finally fulfills the godhead, the immortality. He is the worker of the divine work."

It is up to us to illumine our mind with right knowledge, to realise our character with right conduct and to purify our whole being with that universal truth which alone can dispel darkness and cause 'Surya' to rise on our being. Thus enlightened, elevated and purified alone can we be fit instrument of the Divine Will for fulfilling the Godhead and immortality in and through us.

# ERRATA

Page	Line	Read	For
11	25	his	its
111	28		to
7	18	marvellous	marvelous
9	20	born	borne
14	12	dreamt	dream
21	8	talking	talk
21	17	well being	wel being
30	25	thy	they
38	3	consummat on	consumation
39	20	infinite	infinites
45	9	takes	take
46	12	immortality	immortnity
46	22	believing in	believin,
48	6	in	to
48	19	achievement	achievment
51	13	immortality	immorality
52	2	GITANJALI	GITANGALI
64	8	worldly	wordly
68	7	introduces	introduce
59	23	fruitfulness	fruitfullness
59	19	with	wich
65	5	man	mans
73	25	knowledge	knowlege
76	28	through	though
77	26	possess	possesses
79	2	fulfilment	fulfilment
80	19	in	is
81	13	perceptions	preceptions
80	18	in	is
109	80	of	if
110	16	self fulfilment	self fullfilment
120	8		that
121	6	bodiless	bodyless
122	28	bodiless	bodyless
126	14	sempiternal	semlternal
	28	preceded	preceeded
131	24	is	as
145	20	indispensability	in dispensability



Syne a' behind's our ain    Thus without fear,  
 With love and rowth<sup>1</sup> we thro' the warld will steer,  
 And when my Pate in bairns and gear grow rise,  
 He'll bless the day he gat me for his wife.

*Jenny*

But what if some young gigit on the green  
 With dimpled cheek and twa bewitching een,  
 Should gar your Patie think his half worn Meg  
 And her ken'd kisses, hardly worth a feg?

*Peggy*

Nae mair of that    Dear Jenny, to be free.  
 There's some men constanter in love than we  
 Nor is the ferly great, when nature kind  
 Has blest them with solidity of mind,  
 They'll reason calmly and with kindness smile,  
 When our short passions wad our peace beguile  
 Sae, whensoe'er they slight their marks<sup>2</sup> at hame,  
 'Tis ten to ane their wives are maist to blame.  
 Then I'll employ with pleasure a' my art  
 To keep him cheerfu', and secure his heart.  
 At e'en, when he comes weary frae the hill,  
 I'll have a' things made ready to his will,  
 In winter, when he toils thro' wind and rain,  
 A bleezing-ingle and a clean hearth-stane,  
 And soon as he flings by his plaid and staff,  
 The seething pots be ready to take aff,  
 Clean hagabag<sup>4</sup> I'll spread upon his board  
 And serve him with the best we can afford;  
 Good-humour and white bigonets<sup>5</sup> shall be  
 Guards to my face, to keep his love for me.

*Jenny*

A dish of married love right soon grows cauld,  
 And dosens<sup>6</sup> down to nane, as fowk grow auld.

*Peggy*

But we'll grow auld together, and ne'er find  
 The loss of youth, where love grows on the mind.  
 Bairns and their bairns make sure a firmer tie  
 Than aught in love the like of us can spy.

<sup>1</sup> plenty

<sup>2</sup> wonder

<sup>3</sup> mates

<sup>4</sup> huckaback.

<sup>5</sup> linen caps

<sup>6</sup> dwindles

See yon twa elms that grow up side by side,  
 Suppose them some years syne bridegroom and bride;  
 Nearer and nearer ilka year they've prest,  
 Till wide their spreading branches are increas'd,  
 And in their mixture now are fully blest  
 This shields the other frae the eastlin blast,  
 That in return defends it frae the wast.  
 Sic as stand single (a state sae lik'd by you)  
 Beneath ilk storm frae every airt<sup>1</sup> maun bow

*Jenny*

I've done. I yield dear lassie, I maun yield;  
 Your better sense has fairly won the field,  
 With the assistance of a little fae  
 Lies dernd<sup>2</sup> within my breast this mony a day

PATIE AND PEGGY

*Patie.*

By the delicious warmth of thy mouth  
 And rowing eye, which smiling tells the truth,  
 I guess, my lassie, that, as well as I  
 You're made for love, and why should ye deny?

*Peggy*

But ken ye, lad, gin we confess o'er soon,  
 Ye think us cheap, and syne the wooing's done:  
 The maiden that o'er quickly tines her power  
 Like unripe fruit will taste but hard and sour

*Patie*

But when they hing o'er lang upon the tree,  
 Their sweetness they may tine, and sae may ye;  
 Red-checked you completely ripe appear  
 And I have thoed<sup>3</sup> and wooed a lang half year

*Peggy*

Then dinna pu' me; gently thus I fa  
 Into my Patie's arms for good and a  
 But stint your wishes to this kind embrace,  
 And munt nae farther till we've got the grace.

quarter      hidden.      rolling      loses.      <sup>1</sup> suffered.      aim

*Patie*

O charming armfu'! Hence, ye cares away  
 I'll kiss my treasure a' the livelang day  
 A' night I'll dream my kisses o'er again,  
 Till that day come that ye'll be a' my ain.

*Chorus*

Sun, gallop down the westling skies,  
 Gang soon to bed, and quickly rise;  
 O lash your steeds, post time away,  
 And haste about our bridal day,  
 And if ye're wearied, honest light,  
 Sleep, gin ye like, a week that night.

[From *The Tea-Table Miscellany*]

## THROUGH THE WOOD, LADDIE

O Sandy, why leaves thou thy Nelly to mourn?  
 Thy presence would ease me  
 When naething could please me,  
 Now dowie <sup>1</sup> I sigh on the bank of the burn,  
 Ere through the wood, laddie, until thou return.  
 Though woods now are bonny, and mornings are clear,  
 While lavrocks are singing  
 And primroses springing,  
 Yet nane of them pleases my eye or my ear,  
 When through the wood, laddie, ye dinna appear.  
 That I am forsaken some spare no to tell;  
 I'm fashed wi' their scorning  
 Baith evening and morning,  
 Their jeering aft gaes to my heart wi' a knell,  
 When through the wood, laddie, I wander mysel'.  
 Then stay, my dear Sandie, nae langer away,  
 But quick as an arrow,  
 Haste here to thy marrow<sup>2</sup>,  
 Wha's living in languor till that happy day,  
 When through the wood, laddie, we'll dance, sing, and play

<sup>1</sup> melancholy                      <sup>2</sup> sweetheart.

## AN THOU WERE MY AIN THING.

An thou were my ain thing  
I would love thee, I would love thee;  
An thou were my ain thing  
How dearly I would love thee.

Like bees that suck the morning dew  
Frae flowers of sweetest scent and hue,  
Sae wad I dwell upon thy mow<sup>1</sup>  
And gar the gods envy me.

Sae lang's I had the use of light  
I'd on thy beauties feast my sight,  
Syne in saft whispers through the night  
I'd tell how much I loved thee.

How fair and ruddy is my Jean!  
She moves a goddess o'er the green.  
Were I a king thou should be queen—  
Nane but myself aboon thee.

I'd grasp thee to this breast of mine,  
Whilst thou like ivy on the vine  
Around my stronger limbs should twine,  
Formed handy to defend thee.

Time's on the wing and will not stay  
In shining youth let's make our hay;  
Since love admits of no delay,  
O let na scorn undo thee.

While love does at his altar stand  
Hae, here's my heart, gie me thy hand,  
And with ilk smile thou shalt command  
The will of him who loves thee.

An thou were my ain thing,  
I would love thee, I would love thee;  
An thou were my ain thing,  
How dearly I would love thee.

mouth.

## JAMES THOMSON.

[JAMES THOMSON was born at Ednam in Roxburghshire on the 11th of September, 1700, and died at Kew on the 27th of August, 1748. His first published work, *Winter*, appeared in 1726. The next year *Summer*, *Britannia*, and a few minor poems followed. *Spring* was not published till 1728, and *Autumn* in 1730 completed *The Seasons*. *Sophonisba*, the first of several dramas, appeared in the same year as *Spring*. The first three parts or cantos of *Liberty* were given to the world in 1735, the two last in 1737. *The Castle of Indolence* appeared in 1746, two years before Thomson's death.]

No competent criticism of any school has ever denied Thomson's claim to a place, high if not of the highest, among poets of the second order. His immense and enduring popularity would settle the question, if it had ever been seriously debated. For the *orbis terrarum* may indeed judge without hesitation on such a point, when its judgment is ratified beforehand by many generations. Popularity which outlasts changes of manners and fashions is a testimony to worth which cannot be left out of the account, and Thomson's popularity is eminently of this kind. Neither the somewhat indiscriminate admiration of the romantic style, of which Percy set the fashion, nor the naturalism of Cowper, nor the great revolution championed in various ways by Scott, by the Lakists, and by Byron, nor the still more complete revolution of Shelley and Keats, availed to shake the hold of *The Seasons* on the popular mind. Every one knows Coleridge's remark on seeing a dogs-eared copy on an inn window-sill. During the last century the reading of poetry, except that of contemporary authors, has somewhat gone out of fashion, yet no one who does read *The Seasons*, much more

*The Castle of Indolence* fails to admit their charm. It would hardly be too much to say that, making allowance for the time over which his influence has extended, no poet has given the special pleasure which poetry is capable of giving to so large a number of persons in so large a measure as Thomson.

A critical examination of the characteristics of his poetry enables us at once to justify and explain this widespread popularity. Like many of his contemporaries, Thomson is a very unequal poet. Every one who has really endeavoured to read his favourite *Liberty* must endorse Johnson's contemptuous verdict on it. It is not only not good as a whole, but (which is more remarkable) it is scarcely even good in parts. It is with considerable difficulty that one is able to pick out a few lines here and there where the admirable descriptive faculty of the writer has had room to make itself felt. Most of the minor poems (it is true there are not many of them) are also quite devoid of poetical merit. The graceful 'Tell me, thou soul of her I love' is perhaps the only exception to the rule worth mentioning and certainly the only one worth quoting. It is curious too that on the few occasions on which Thomson attempted the heroic couplet, the special and favourite metre of his time, he produced very bad work. Blank verse and the Spenserian stanza he understood admirably and his blank verse in especial cannot receive too much commendation. With that of Milton, and that of the present Poet Laureate, it must rank as one of the chief original models of the metre to be found in English poetry. Nothing again can be more exquisite than the opening stanzas of *The Castle of Indolence* in respect of metrical proficiency. Now this excellence of form, whatever some critics may think, is a very important element in enduring popularity because it is not liable to danger from changes of fashion. The qualities which strike the ear pleasantly remain very much the same at all times, unless—and sometimes even when—the language employed has become hopelessly dead. We have at this moment (with the good leave of certain persons of distinction) hardly the faintest idea how the opening of the *De Rerum Natura* sounded when Lucretius read it, and still less of what the choruses of the *Agamemnon* conveyed to the ears of an Athenian audience. But the abiding charm of their form is not lost for us. How much more must this be the case in such work as Thomson's, when the language has undergone merely unimportant modifications. But the metrical charm of Thomson is not his only or indeed his chief



poetry is usually on them in a wholly reconciling degree, as in the lines—

On utmost Kilda's shore whose lonely race  
Resign the setting sun to Indian worlds.

Passing from isolated phrases to longer passages, we may point out that the power of composition which Thomson's landscapes display is very remarkable. Owing to this faculty no poet perhaps is seen to such advantage in extracts of moderate length as Thomson. His narrative episodes, which used to be the most popular are perhaps not so good as some of the descriptive passages, because instead of being painted in with lasting colours they show too often the mere varnish of the sensibility of the time which has now ceased to appear sensible. To the charge of mannerism he must indeed plead guilty. A poet who caps the climax of three several descriptive passages with three such lines as—

And Egypt joys beneath the spreading wave,  
And Mecca saddens at the long delay  
And Thule bellows through her utmost isles,

all within the compass of half a dozen pages, may be accused with some justice of taking too literally the legendary advice to stick to the coo. But this, and the occasional ponderosity of his language, are almost the only charges of any weight that can fairly be brought against *The Seasons*.

*The Castle of Indolence* is even better. The second book does not indeed deserve quite so much praise as the first, being written evidently with less relish, and containing a good deal of otiose and conventional matter. But the first book is not only Thomson's best work, but is one of the very best things of its kind to be found either in English or in any other literature. For it possesses, what *The Seasons* almost of necessity lack, a coherent plan and scheme which are fully and successfully carried out. It is quite complete in itself, and needs no sequel as a work of art. Nor does it need any internal addition. The picture of the castle and its demesne, with the portraits of the chief sojourners, are quite sufficient for the canvas, and few persons will find any fault with the manner in which they are put upon it. Although the archaisms are not always used quite according to knowledge, the slips in this respect are neither in nature nor degree sufficient to interfere with the enjoyment of the piece. The four final stanzas, which are attributed to Armstrong, are perhaps not wholly in character but even

this is a point on which it is difficult to pronounce decidedly, and with hardly another detail of the book can any fault be found. The opening stanzas, the speech of Indolence, the striking passage where 'the shepherd of the Hebrid Isles' appears, and that describing the fancies that visit the inmates during their sleep, could not be better. How far the occasional touches of burlesque injure the claims of the piece to high poetical rank, is a very intricate question of poetical criticism upon which there is no need to enter here. It is sufficient to say that of the peculiar faculty which we have claimed for Thomson, the faculty of exhibiting specially poetical quality in a form capable of being enjoyed by everybody, there are few better examples in our language than *The Castle of Indolence*.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY

## A SNOW SCENE.

[From *Hesper*.]

The keener tempests come and fuming dun  
From all the livid east, or piercing north  
Thick clouds ascend—in whose capacious womb  
A vapoury deluge lies, to snow congealed.  
Heavy they roll their fleecy world along  
And the sky saddens with the gathered storm.  
Through the hushed air the whitening shower descends,  
At first thin wavering till at last the flakes  
Fall broad, and wide, and fast, dimming the day  
With a continual flow The cherished fields  
Put on their winter robe of purest white.  
Tis brightness all; save where the new snow melts  
Along the many current. Low the woods  
Bow their hoar head and, ere the languid sun  
Faint from the west emits his evening ray  
Earth's universal face, deep-hid and chill,  
Is one wild dazzling waste that buries wide  
The works of man. Drooping the labourer-ox  
Stands covered o'er with snow and then demands  
The fruit of all his toil. The fowls of heaven,  
Tamed by the cruel season crowd around  
The winnowing store, and claim the little boon  
Which Providence assigns them. One alone,  
The redbreast, sacred to the household gods,  
Wisely regardful of the embroiling sky  
In joyless fields and thorny thickets leaves  
His shivering mates, and pays to trusted man  
His annual visit. Half-afraid, he first  
Against the window beats then, brisk, alights  
On the warm hearth; then, hopping o'er the floor,  
Eyes all the smiling family askance,  
And pecks, and starts, and wonders where he is—

Till, more familiar grown, the table crumbs  
 Attract his slender feet The foodle - wilds  
 Pour forth their brown inhabitants The hare,  
 Though timorous of heart, and hard beset  
 By death in various forms, dark snares, and dogs,  
 And more unpitying men, the garden seeds,  
 Urged on by fearless want The bleating kind  
 Eye the black heaven, and next the glistening earth,  
 With looks of dumb despair, then, sad dispersed,  
 Dig for the withered herb through heaps of snow.

### THE SHEEP-WASHING.

[From *Siriver*]

Or rushing thence, in one diffusive band,  
 They drive the troubled flocks, by many a dog  
 Compelled, to where the mazy-running brook  
 Forms a deep pool, this bank abrupt and high,  
 And that, fair-spreading in a pebbled shore.  
 Urged to the giddy brink, much is the toil,  
 The clamour much, of men, and boys, and dogs,  
 Ere the soft fearful people to the flood  
 Commit their woolly sides And oft the swain,  
 On some impatient seizing, hurls them in  
 Emboldened then, nor hesitating more,  
 Fast, fast, they plunge amid the flashing wave,  
 And panting labour to the farthest shore  
 Repeated this, till deep the well-washed fleece  
 Has drunk the flood, and from his lively haunt  
 The trout is banished by the sordid stream,  
 Heavy and dripping, to the breezy brow  
 Slow move the harmless race, where, as they spread  
 Their swelling treasures to the sunny ray,  
 Inly disturbed, and wondering what this wild  
 Outrageous tumult means, their loud complaints  
 The country fill—and, tossed from rock to rock,  
 Incessant bleatings run around the hills.  
 At last, of snowy white, the gathered flocks  
 Are in the wattled pen innumerable pressed,

Head above head and ranged in lusty rows  
The shepherds sit, and whet the sounding shears.  
The housewife waits to roll her fleecy stores,  
With all her gay-drest maids attending round.  
One, chief, in gracious dignity enthroned,  
Shines o'er the rest the pastoral queen, and rays  
Her smiles, sweet-beaming on her shepherd king  
While the glad circle round them yield their souls  
To festive mirth, and wit that knows no gull.  
Meantime, their joyous task goes on apace  
Some mingling stir the melted tar and some,  
Deep on the new shorn vagrant's heaving side,  
To stamp his master's cypher ready stand;  
Others the unwilling wether drag along;  
And, glorying in his might, the sturdy boy  
Holds by the twisted horns the indignant ram.  
Behold where bound, and of its robe bereft,  
By needy man, that all-depending lord,  
How meek, how patient, the mild creature lies!  
What softness in its melancholy face,  
What dumb complaining innocence appears!  
Fear not, ye gentle tribes, 'tis not the knife  
Of horrid slaughter that is o'er you waved  
No, 'tis the tender swain's well-guided shears,  
Who having now to pay his annual care,  
Borrowed your fleece, to you a cumbrous load,  
Will send you bounding to your hills again.

## THE COMING OF THE RAIN.

[From *Spring*]

At first a dusky wreath they seem to rise,  
Scarce staining ether; but by fast degrees,  
In heaps on heaps, the doubling vapour sails  
Along the loaded sky and mingling deep,  
Sits on the horizon round a settled gloom  
Not such as wintry storms on mortals shed,  
Oppressing life; but lovely gentle, kind,  
And full of every hope and every joy,

The wish of Nature. Gradual sinks the breeze  
Into a perfect calm, that not a breath  
Is heard to quiver through the closing woods,  
Or rustling turn the many twinkling leaves  
Of aspen tall. The uncurling floods, diffused  
In glassy breadth, seem through delusive lapse  
Forgetful of their course 'Tis silence all,  
And pleasing expectation Herds and flocks  
Drop the dry sprig, and, mute-imploing, eye  
The fallen verdure Hushed in short suspense,  
The plummy people streak their wings with oil,  
To throw the lucid moisture trickling off,  
And wait the approaching sign to strike, at once,  
Into the general choir Even mountains, vales,  
And forests seem, impatient, to demand  
The promised sweetness Man superior walks  
Amid the glad creation, musing praise,  
And looking lively gratitude At last,  
The clouds consign their treasures to the fields,  
And, softly shaking on the dimpled pool  
Prelusive drops, let all their moisture flow,  
In large effusion, o'er the freshened world.

## STORM IN HARVEST

[From *Autumn* ]

Defeating oft the labours of the year,  
The sultry south collects a potent blast.  
At first, the groves are scarcely seen to stir  
Their trembling tops, and a still murmur runs  
Along the soft-inclining fields of corn,  
But as the aerial tempest fuller swells,  
And in one mighty stream, invisible,  
Immense, the whole excited atmosphere  
Impetuous rushes o'er the sounding world,  
Strained to the root, the stooping forest pours  
A rustling shower of yet untimely leaves.  
High-beat, the circling mountains eddy in,  
From the bare wild, the dissipated storm

And send it in a torrent down the vale.  
Exposed, and naked, to its utmost rage,  
Through all the sea of harvest rolling round,  
The billowy plain floats wide; nor can evade,  
Though pliant to the blast, its seizing force—  
Or whirled in air or into vacant chaff  
Shook waste. And sometimes too a burst of rain,  
Swept from the black horizon, broad, descends  
In one continuous flood. Still over head  
The mingling tempest weaves its gloom, and still  
The deluge deepens till the fields around  
Lie sunk, and flatted, in the sordid wave.  
Sudden the ditches swell; the meadows swim.  
Red, from the hills, innumerable streams  
Tumultuous roar; and high above its bank  
The river lift before whose rushing tide,  
Herds, flocks, and harvests, cottages, and swains,  
Roll mingled down all that the winds had spared,  
In one wild moment ruined; the big hopes,  
And well-earned treasures, of the painful year.  
Fled to some eminence, the husbandman,  
Helpless, beholds the miserable wreck  
Driving along his drowning ox at once  
Descending with his labours scattered round,  
He sees and instant o'er his shivering thought  
Comes Winter unprovided, and a train  
Of clamant children dear Ye masters, then,  
Be mindful of the rough laborious hand  
That sinks you soft in elegance and ease;  
Be mindful of those limbs, in russet clad,  
Whose toil to yours is warmth and graceful pride;  
And, oh, be mindful of that sparing board  
Which covers yours with luxury profuse,  
Makes your glass sparkle, and your sense rejoice!  
Nor cruelly demand what the deep rains  
And all involving winds have swept away

## TO HER I LOVE.

Tell me, thou soul of her I love,  
 Ah! tell me, whither art thou fled;  
 To what delightful world above,  
 Appointed for the happy dead?

Or dost thou, free, at pleasure, roam  
 And sometimes share thy lover's woe;  
 Where, void of thee, his cheerless home  
 Can now, alas! no comfort know?

Oh! if thou hoverest round my walk,  
 While, under every well-known tree,  
 I to thy fancied shadow talk,  
 And every tear is full of thee,

Should then the weary eye of grief,  
 Beside some sympathetic stream,  
 In slumber find a short relief,  
 Oh! visit thou my soothing dream!

## FROM 'THE CASTLE OF INDOLENCE'

## BOOK L

In lovely dale, fast by a river's side,  
 With woody hill o'er hill encompassed round,  
 A most enchanting wizard did abide,  
 Than whom a fiend more fell is nowhere found.  
 It was, I ween, a lovely spot of ground,  
 And there a season 'twixt June and May,  
 Half pruned with spring, with summer half imbrowned,  
 A leafless cypress made, where, sooth to say,  
 No Lullaby, but could work, he cared even for play

Was nought around but images of rest  
Sleep-soothing groves, and quiet lawns between ;  
And flowery beds that slumbrous influence keet,  
From poppies breathed, and beds of pleasant green,  
Where never yet was creeping creature seen.  
Meantime, unnumbered glittering streamlets played,  
And hurld everywhere their waters sheen ;  
That, as they bickered through the sunny glade,  
Though restless still themselves, a lulling murmur made.

Joined to the prattle of the purling rills  
Were heard the lowing herds along the vale,  
And flocks loud bleating from the distant hills,  
And vacant shepherds piping in the dale  
And, now and then, sweet I lulmel would wail,  
Or stockdoves plain amid the forest deep,  
That drowsy rustled to the sighing gale ;  
And still a coil the grasshopper did keep ;  
Yet all these sounds yblent inclined all to sleep.

Full in the passage of the vale, above,  
A sable, silent, solemn forest stood,  
Where nought but shadowy forms was seen to move,  
As idless fancied in her dreaming mood ;  
And up the hills, on either side, a wood  
Of blackening pines, aye waving to and fro,  
Sent forth a sleepy horror through the blood ;  
And where this valley winded out, below  
The murmuring main was heard, and scarcely heard, to flow.

A pleasing land of drowsy head it was,  
Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye ;  
And of gay castles in the clouds that pass,  
For ever flushing round a summer-sky  
There eke the soft delights, that witchingly  
Instil a wanton sweetness through the breast ;  
And the calm pleasures always hovered nigh ;  
But whate'er smacked of noyance or unrest,  
Was far far off expelled from this delicious nest.

Straight of these endless numbers, - many a road,  
 As thick as idle noise in many a row,  
 Not one of room in view was to be found,  
 But every man trod off his own gay way ;  
 Wide o'er the ample coast black herds,  
 With all the lodges that the eye perceived,  
 No living creature could be seen to stray ,  
 While solitude, and perfect silence reigned,  
 So that to think you dreamt you stood was contrived

As when a shepherd of the Hebrews,  
 Placed far amid the melancholy train,  
 (Whether it be lone fancy him beguiles,  
 Or that aerial beings sometimes deign  
 To stand embodied, to our senses plain)  
 Sees on the naked hill, or valley low,  
 The whilst in Ocean Phoebus dips his vain,  
 A vast assembly moving to and fro,  
 Then all at once in air dissolves the vizards show

\* \* \* \* \*

Near the pavilions where we slept, still ran  
 Soft tinkling streams, and dashing waters fell,  
 And sobbing breezes sighed, and oft began  
 (So worked the wizard) wintry storms to swell,  
 As heaven and earth they would together melt,  
 At doors and windows threatening seemed to call  
 The demons of the tempest, growling fell,  
 Yet the least entrance found they none at all  
 Whence sweeter grew our sleep secure in massy hall

And hither Morpheus sent his kindest dreams,  
 Raising a world of gayer tinct and grace ,  
 O'er which were shadowy cast elysian gleams,  
 That played, in waving lights, from place to place ,  
 And shed a roseate smile on nature's face.  
 Not Titian's pencil e'er could so array,  
 So fleece with clouds the pure ethereal space ,  
 Ne could it e'er such melting forms display,  
 As loose on flowery beds all languishingly lay

No, fair illusions! artful phantoms, no!  
 My muse will not attempt your fairy land  
 She has no colours that like you can glow  
 To catch your vivid scenes too gross her hand.  
 But sure it is, was ne'er a subtler band  
 Than these same guileful angel seeming sprights,  
 Who thus in dreams voluptuous, soft, and bland,  
 Poured all the Arabian heaven upon our nights,  
 And blest them oft besides with more refined delights.

\* \* \* \* \*

To number up the thousands dwelling here,  
 An useless were, and eke an endless task  
 From kings, and those who at the helm appear  
 To gipsies brown in summer-glades who bask.  
 Yea many a man, perdie, I could unmask,  
 Whose desk and table make a solemn show  
 With tape-ty'd trash, and suits of fools that ask  
 For place or pension laid in decent row;  
 But these I passen by with nameless numbers mon.

Of all the gentle tenants of the place,  
 There was a man of special grave remark<sup>1</sup>;  
 A certain tender gloom o'erspread his face,  
 Pensive, not sad in thought involv'd, not dark;  
 As soot this man could sing as morning lark,  
 And teach the noblest morals of the heart  
 But these his talents were yburied stark  
 Of the fine stores he nothing would impart,  
 Which or boon Nature gave, or nature-painting Art.

To noontide shades incontinent he ran,  
 Where purls the brook with sleep-inviting sound,  
 Or when Dan Sol to slope his wheels began,  
 Amid the broom he bask'd him on the ground,  
 Where the wild thyme and camomile are found;  
 There would he linger till the latest ray  
 Of light fate trembling on the welkin's bound,  
 Then homeward thro the twilight shadows stray  
 Sauntering and slow so had he passed many a day

Yet not in thoughtless slumber were they past;  
For oft the heavenly fire, that lay conceal'd  
Beneath the sleeping embers, mounted fast,  
And all its native light anew revealed,  
Oft as he travers'd the cerulean field,  
And marked the clouds that drove before the wind,  
Ten thousand glorious systems would he build,  
Ten thousand great ideas fill'd his mind  
But with the clouds they fled, and left no trace behind.

With him was sometimes join'd, in silent walk,  
(Profoundly silent, for they never spoke)  
One shyer still<sup>1</sup>, who quite detested talk;  
Oft stung by spleen, at once away he broke,  
To groves of pine and broad o'ershadowing oak,  
There inly thrill'd, he wander'd all alone,  
And on himself his pensive fury wrote,  
Ne ever utter'd word, save when first shone  
The glittering star of eve—'Thank Heaven! the day is done.'

<sup>1</sup> Probably the poet Armstrong

## JOHN ARMSTRONG

[JOHN ARMSTRONG was born in Liddesdale about the year 1709, and died in London in 1779. His poetical works, which here alone concern us, were *The Economy of Love* 1739, *The Art of Preserving Health*, 1744, and some slight pieces published in volumes of miscellanies later.]

Armstrong is, beyond all doubt, the most remarkable poet of the school of Thomson. It would appear that the style in his case was not the result merely of imitation of the author of *The Seasons* but came from a similar cause, the study at once of the Queen Anne men and of older writers. Both Shakespeare and Spenser were sufficiently attractive to Armstrong when he was quite a boy to induce him to imitate them, and though the imitations show more zeal than appreciation, they have some merit. *The Economy of Love*, from which no extracts can here be given, contains many stately verses, and some which exhibit considerable novelty of structure. On the whole Armstrong's versification and language are Thomsonian. The blemishes of that style, such as the ridiculous classicism which calls a cold bath a gelid cistern, and so forth, are present in large measure. But the merits of abundant fancy of surprising range of illustration, and of a certain starched grace which is not unattractive, are present likewise. It would be difficult to find a more unsuitable subject for poetry than the art of preserving health: yet in treating it Armstrong has managed to produce many passages which lovers and students of blank verse cannot afford to disdain. His vigour is unquestionable, and his skill is by no means of an every-day order. The poem however is deformed, not merely by the unavoidable drawbacks of its subject, but by the insertion of a large mass of unnecessary and now obsolete technicalities, which could at no time have added to its

attractions, and which now make parts of it nearly unreadable. Here and there, too, we are offended by the defect which Armstrong shares with Swift and with Smollett, the tendency to indulge in merely nauseous details. On the whole however the merits of *The Art of Preserving Health* far outweigh its defects. It may indeed be urged by a devil's advocate that it is but a left-handed compliment to say that a man has done better than could be expected a task which, as sense and taste should have shown him, ought not to have been attempted at all. But Armstrong must always have, with competent judges, the praise which belongs to an author who has a distinct and peculiar grasp of a great poetical form. His rhymed verse is on the whole very inferior to his blank. The rhymes are frequently careless, and the poet's ear does not seem to have taught him how to construct couplets with the proper variety and continuity of cadence. His satire however, if a little conventional, is sometimes vigorous, and a specimen of the poem entitled *Taste* is therefore given here

GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

## FROM THE ART OF PRESERVING HEALTH

## BOOK III.

The body moulded by the clime, endures  
The equator heats or hyperborean frost :  
Except by habits foreign to its turn,  
Unwise, you counteract its forming power  
Rude at the first, the winter shocks you less  
By long acquaintance study then your sky  
Form to its manners your obsequious frame,  
And learn to suffer what you cannot shun.  
Against the rigors of a damp cold heav'n  
To fortify their bodies some frequent  
The gelid cistern ; and, where nought forbids  
I praise their dauntless heart a frame so steeld  
Dreads not the cough, nor those ungenial blasts  
That breathe the tertian or fell rheumatism.  
The nerves so tempered never quit their tone,  
No chronic languors haunt such hardy breasts.  
But all things have their bounds and he who makes  
By daily use the kindest regimen  
Essential to his health, should never mix  
With human kind, nor art, nor trade pursue.  
He not the safe vicissitudes of life  
Without some shock endures ill fitted he  
To want the known, or bear unusual things.  
Besides, the powerful remedies of pain  
(Since pain in spite of all our care will come)  
Should never with your prosperous days of health  
Grow too familiar for by frequent use  
The strongest medicines lose their healing power  
And even the surest poisons theirs to kill.

## BOOK IV

How to live happiest ? how avoid the pains,  
The disappointments, and disgusts of those  
Who would in pleasure all their hours employ

The precepts here of a divine old man  
I could recite Tho' old, he still retained  
His manly sense, and energy of mind.  
Virtuous and wise he was, but not severe ;  
He still remembered that he once was young ;  
His easy presence checked no decent joy  
Him even the dissolute admired , for he  
A graceful looseness when he pleased put on,  
And laughing could instruct Much had he read,  
Much more had seen he studied from the life,  
And in th' original perused mankind.  
Versed in the woes and vanities of life  
He pitied man and much he pitied those  
Whom falsely-smiling fate has cursed with means  
To dissipate their days in quest of joy  
'Our aim is happiness , 'tis yours, 'tis mine,'  
He said, 'tis the pursuit of all that live  
Yet few attain it, if 'twas e'er attained.  
But they the widest wander from the mark,  
Who thro' the flowery paths of sauntering joy  
Seek this coy goddess that from stage to stage  
Invites us still, but shifts as we pursue  
For, not to name the pains that pleasure brings  
To counterpoise itself, relentless fate  
Forbids that we thro' gay voluptuous wilds  
Should ever roam and were the fates more kind  
Our narrow luxuries would soon grow stale  
Were these exhaustless, nature would grow sick,  
And, cloyed with pleasure, squeamishly complain  
That all is vanity, and life a dream.  
Let nature rest be busy for yourself,  
And for your friend , be busy even in vain  
Rather than tease her sated appetites  
Who never fasts no banquet e'er enjoys ,  
Who never toils or watches, never sleeps  
Let nature rest and when the taste of joy  
Grows keen, indulge , but shun satiety  
'Tis not for mortals always to be blest,  
But him the least the dull or painful hours

Of life oppress, whom sober sense conducts,  
And virtue, thro' this labyrinth we tread.  
Virtue and sense I mean not to disjoin ;  
Virtue and sense are one and trust me, still  
A faithless heart betrays the head unsound.  
Virtue (for mere good nature is a fool)  
Is sense and spirit with humanity  
'Tis sometimes angry and its frown confounds ;  
'Tis even vindictive, but in vengeance just.  
Knaves fain would laugh at it : some great ones dare  
But at his heart the most undaunted son  
Of fortune dreads its name and awful charms.  
To noblest uses this determines wealth ;  
This is the solid pomp of prosperous days ;  
The peace and shelter of adversity  
And if you pant for glory, build your fame  
On this foundation, which the secret shock  
Defies of envy and all-sapping time.  
The gaudy gloss of fortune only strikes  
The vulgar eye ; the suffrage of the wise,  
The praise that's worth ambition, is attained  
By sense alone and dignity of mind.  
Virtue, the strength and beauty of the soul,  
Is the best gift of Heaven a happiness  
That even above the smiles and frowns of fate  
Exalts great Nature's favourites ; a wealth  
That ne'er encumbers, nor can be transferr'd.

## FROM 'TASTE, AN EPISTLE TO A YOUNG CRITIC.

Read boldly, and unprejudiced peruse  
Each fav'rite modern, e'en each ancient Muse.  
With all the comic salt and tragic rage,  
The great stupendous genius of our stage,  
Boast of our island, pride of humankind,  
Had faults to which the boxes are not blind ;  
His frailties are to every gossip known,  
Yet Milton's pedantries not shock the town.

Ne'er be the dupe of names however high,  
For some outlive good parts, some misapply  
Each elegant Spectator you admire,  
But must you therefore swear by Cato's fire?  
Masks for the court, and oft a clumsy jest,  
Disgraced the muse that wrought the Alchemist  
'But to the ancients'—Faith! I am not clear,  
For all the smooth round type of Elzevir,  
That ev'ry work which lasts in prose or song  
Two thousand years deserves to last so long  
For—not to mention some eternal blades  
Known only now in academic shades,  
(Those sacred groves where raptured spirits stray,  
And in word-hunting waste the livelong day)  
Ancients whom none but curious critics scan,—  
Do read Messala's praises if you can  
Ah! who but feels the sweet contagious smart  
While soft Tibullus pours his tender heart?  
With him the loves and muses melt in tears,  
But not a word of some hexameters!  
'You grow so squeamish and so devilish dry  
You'll call Lucretius rapid next' Not I  
Some find him tedious, others think him lame,  
But if he lags his subject is to blame.  
Rough weary roads thro' barren wilds he tried  
Yet still he marches with true Roman pride,  
Sometimes a meteor, gorgeous, rapid, bright,  
He streams athwart the philosophic night.  
Find you in Horace no insipid odes?—  
He dared to tell us Homer sometimes nods;  
And but for such a critic's hardy skill  
Homer might slumber unsuspected still

## WILLIAM SOMERVILLE

[WILLIAM SOMERVILLE was born in Warwickshire in 1677. He was educated at Winchester and became a Fellow of New College, Oxford. In 1704 he inherited the seat of his ancestors, Edston, where he spent the remainder of his life as a country gentleman. Late in life he began to write, and published *The Two Springs*, 1725 *Occasional Poems* 1727 *The Chase*, 1734 and *Hobbesvol*. He died July 19, 1743 and was buried at Wotton, near Henley in Arden.]

Somerville was a handsome noisy squire, a strapping fellow six feet high, a hard rider, a crack shot. No more characteristic specimen of the sporting country gentleman, pure and simple, could be imagined, or one less likely to develop into a poet. It was, in fact, not until fast living had begun to break down his constitution that he took to literature as a consolation. One of his earliest exercises was an epistle addressed to Addison, who had bought a property in Warwickshire, and so had become Somerville's neighbour. This poem is neatly and enthusiastically versified, and contains the well-known compliment which pleased Dr Johnson so much —

When panting Virtue her last efforts made,  
You brought your Clio to the virgin's aid.

Somerville was the disciple of Addison, but he enjoyed at the same time the friendship of Pope. A lyric correspondence with Allan Ramsay tells us more about his person than we should otherwise have known, and an epistle to James Thomson displays the respect with which he learned to contemplate his own literary judgment. A friendship with the boyish Shenstone was the last event of a career that ended very plaintively in pain, financial ruin, and drunkenness. His life is a singular variant of the pagan ideal

of the time, it is curious to find a boisterous squire, of the coarse type that Fielding painted in the next generation, assuming the airs of a stoic and a wit, and striking the fashionable Cato attitude in top-boots and a hunting-belt.

Somerville, who was a well-read man, took the *Cynegetica* of Grattius Faliscus as his model, when he produced his best poem, *The Chase*. Like the Latin poet, he alternates moral maxims with practical information about the training and the points of hounds. This epic, which is in four books, discusses in its first part the origin of hunting, the economy of kennels, the physical and moral accomplishments of hounds, and the choosing of a good or bad scenting day. The second book, which possesses more natural language and a finer literary quality than the others, commences with directions for hare-hunting, and closes with a moral reproof of tyranny. In the third book hunting is treated from an antiquarian and an exotic standpoint, while the fourth deals with the breeding of hounds, their diseases, and the diseases they cause, such as hydrophobia. It will hardly be guessed from such a sketch of the contents that *The Chase* is a remarkably readable and interesting poem. It is composed in blank verse that is rarely turgid and not very often flat, and the zeal and science of the author give a certain vitality to his descriptions which compels the reader's attention. People that have a practical knowledge of the matters described confess that Somerville thoroughly understood what he was talking about, and that in his easy chair before the fire he 'plied his function of the woodland' no less admirably than he had done in the saddle in his athletic youth.

The success of *The Chase* induced him, when he was quite an old man, to sing of fishing and of the bowling green, but on these subjects he was less interesting than on hunting. His *Hobbinol*, a sort of mock-heroic poem on rural games, written in emulation of *The Splendid Shilling* of John Philips, was intended to be sprightly, and only succeeded in being ridiculous. Less foolish, but somewhat coarsely and frivolously easy, were his *Fables*, in the manner of Prior. Posterity, in short, has refused to regard Somerville in any other light than as the broken-down squire, warming himself with a mug of ale in his ancestral chimney corner, and instructing the magnificent Mr Addison in the mysteries of breeds and points.

## FROM 'THE CHASE'

### BOOK I.

Ye vigorous youths, by smiling fortune blest  
With large demesnes, hereditary wealth,  
Heap'd copious by your wise forefathers' care,  
Hear and attend ! while I the means reveal  
T' enjoy those pleasures, for the weak too strong  
Too costly for the poor to rein the steed  
Swift-stretching o'er the plain, to cheer the pack  
Opening in concerts of harmonious joy  
But breathing death. What tho' the gripe severe  
Of brazen fisted time, and slow disease  
Creeping thro' ev'ry vein, and nerve unstrung,  
Afflict my shattered frame, undaunted still,  
Fixed as a mountain ash, that braves the bolts  
Of angry Jove tho' blasted, yet unfallen ;  
Still can my soul in fancy's mirror view  
Deeds glorious once, recall the joyous scene  
In all its splendours decked, o'er the full bowl  
Recount my triumphs past, urge others on  
With hand and voice, and point the winding way :  
Pleased with that social sweet garrulity  
The poor disbanded veteran's sole delight.

First let the kennel be the huntsman's care,  
Upon some little eminence erect,  
And fronting to the ruddy dawn its courts  
On either hand wide op'ning to receive  
The sun's all-cheering beams, when mild he shines,  
And gilds the mountain tops. For much the pack  
(Roused from their dark alcoves) delight to stretch  
And bask, in his invigorating ray  
Warned by the streaming light, and merry lark,  
Forth rush the jolly clan with tuneful throats  
They carol loud, and in grand chorus joined  
Salute the new born day

## BOOK II

Here on this verdant spot, where Nature kind,  
With double blessings crowns the farmer's hopes ,  
Where flowers autumnal spring, and the rank mead  
Affords the wand'ring hares a rich repast ,  
Throw off thy ready pack. See, where they spread  
And range around, and dash the glitt'ring dew  
If some staunch hound, with his authentic voice,  
Avow the recent trail, the justling tribe  
Attend his call, then with one mutual cry,  
The welcome news confirm, and echoing hills  
Repeat the pleasing tale. See how they thread  
The brakes, and up yon furrow drive along !  
But quick they back recoil, and wisely check  
Their eager haste , then o'er the fallowed ground  
How leisurely they work, and many a pause  
Th' harmonious concert breaks , till more assured  
With joy redoubled the low valleys ring  
What artful labyrinths perplex their way !  
Ah ! there she lies , how close ! she pants, she doubts  
If now she lives , she trembles as she sits,  
With horror seized. The withered grass that clings  
Around her head, of the same russet hue  
Almost deceived my sight, had not her eyes  
With life full-beaming her vain wiles betrayed.  
At distance draw thy pack, let all be hushed,  
No clamour loud, no frantic joy be heard,  
Lest the wild hound run gadding o'er the plain  
Untractable, nor hear thy chiding voice.  
Now gently put her off , see how direct  
To her known Muse she flies ! Here, huntsman, bring  
(But without hurry) all thy jolly hounds,  
And calmly lay them in How low they stoop,  
And seem to plough the ground ! then all at once  
With greedy nostrils snuff the fuming steam  
That glads their flutt'ring hearts As winds let loose  
From the dark caverns of the blustering God,  
They burst away, and sweep the dewy lawn.

Hope gives them wings while she's spurred on by fear  
The welkin rings, men, dogs, hills, rocks, and woods  
In the full concert join. Now my brave youths,  
Stripped for the chace, give all your souls to joy!  
See how their coursers, than the mountain roe  
More fleet the verdant carpet skim, thick clouds  
Snorting they breathe, their shining hoofs scarce print  
The grass unbruised with emulation fired  
They strain to lead the field, top the barred gate,  
O'er the deep ditch exulting bound, and brush  
The thorny twining hedge; the riders bend  
O'er their arched necks; with steady hands, by turns  
Indulge their speed, or moderate their rage.  
Where are their sorrows, disappointments, wrongs,  
Vexations, sickness, cares? All, all are gone,  
And with the panting winds lag far behind.

## MATTHEW GREEN.

[MATTHEW GREEN was born in 1696. He came of a Dissenting family, held a post in the Custom House, and died a bachelor at a lodging in Nag's Head Court, Gracechurch Street, in 1737. His first poem *The Grotto* was published in 1732, *The Spleen*, his chief work, appeared in 1737. In 1796 it was published in a volume with some additional pieces and a preface by Dr Aikin.]

To most people the name of Matthew Green, if it suggests anything, suggests a line in his longest poem,—the familiar

‘Fling but a stone, the giant dies,’

which occurs in his general plea for physical exercise. It would almost appear as if the first discoverer of this happily concise precept, exhausted by the effort, had rested from further enquiry, for it is not often that one hears reference made to any other part of the poem. And yet *The Spleen* is full of things almost if not quite as good, and marked in all cases by distinct originality and a fresh and unfettered mode of utterance. Now it is a clever simile, as when poetasters are spoken of as those who

‘buzz in rhyme, and, like blind flies,  
Err with their wings for want of eyes’,

now a picture-couplet, such as this of the divine

‘in whose gay red-lettered face,  
We read good living more than grace’,

now a perfectly poetic line like

‘Brown fields their fallow sabbaths keep’,

or lastly such a pleasantly ingenuous passage as that in which the

effect of blue eyes on the old is compared to the miracle of St. Januarius —

Shine but on age you melt its snow;  
Again fires long-extinguished glow  
And, charmed by witchery of eyes,  
Blood long congealed liquefies!  
True miracle and surely done  
By beads which are adored while on.

But to multiply quotations would be practically to reproduce the entire poem, which is not long. Green suffered really or poetically from the fashionable eighteenth-century disorder which Pope has so well described in *The Rape of the Lock* and in this motley piece, as he calls it, he sets forth the various expedients which he employed to evade his enemy. Taken altogether his precepts constitute a code of philosophy not unlike that advocated in more than one of the Odes of Horace. To observe the religion of the body to cultivate cheerfulness and calm; to keep a middle course and possess his soul in quiet; content, as regards the future, to ignore what Heaven withholds,—such are the chief features of his plan. But, in developing his principles he takes occasion to deal many a side long stroke at imperfect humanity and not always at those things only which are opposed to his theory of conduct. Female education, faction, law religious sects, reform, speculation, place-hunting poetry ambition,—all these are briefly touched, and seldom left unmarked by some quivering shaft of ridicule. Towards the end of the poem comes an ideal picture of rural retirement, which may be compared with the joint version by Pope and Swift of Horace's sixth satire in the second book and the whole closes with the writer's views upon immortality and a summary of his practice. Regarded as a whole, we can recall few discursive poems which contain so much compact expression and witty illustration. The author was evidently shrewd and observant, and unusually gifted in the detection of grotesque aspects and remote affinities. He must have been more than fairly read, and although at the outset of his task he appears to disclaim scholarship,<sup>1</sup> he must have been familiar with classical commonplaces—

<sup>1</sup> School-helps I want, to climb on high  
Where all the ancient treasures lie  
And there unseen commit a theft  
On wealth in Greek exchequers left.

witness, for instance, the line 'See better things and do the worst', although for this and other examples he may have gone no farther than that eighteenth century repertory of ready-made learning, the mottoes of the *Spectator*. In his verse, notwithstanding that he occasionally makes use of such hideous Latinisms as 'nefandous' and 'secundous,' his vocabulary is fresh and exact, and remarkably free from the conventionalism of contemporary poetic diction.

Of Green's remaining pieces, *The Grotto*, and the lines *On Barclay's Apology for the Quakers* are the most noteworthy. Both of these are characterised by the same qualities which are exhibited in *The Spleen*. *The Seeker* is a humorous little picture of the different professors of religion.

AUSTIN DOBSON

## FROM THE SPLEEN.

To cure the mind's wrong bias Spleen,  
Some recommend the bowling-green ;  
Some, hilly walks ; all, exercise ;  
Fling but a stone, the giant dies.  
Laugh and be well. Monkeys have been  
*Extreme good doctors for the Spleen ;*  
And kitten, if the humour hit,  
Has harlequined away the fit.

Since mirth is good in this behalf,  
At some particulars let us laugh.  
Witlings, brisk fools cursed with half sense,  
That stimulates their impotence  
Who buzz in rhyme, and, like blind flies,  
Err with their wings for want of eyes  
Poor authors worshipping a calf,  
Deep tragedies that make us laugh,  
A strict dissenter saying grace,  
A lecturer preaching for a place,  
Folks, things prophetic to dispense,  
Making the past the future tense,  
The popish dubbing of a priest,  
Fine epitaphs on knaves deceased,  
Green-aproned Pythonissas rage,  
Great Æsculapius on his stage,  
A miser starving to be rich,  
The prior of Newgate's dying speech,  
A jointured widow's ritual state,  
Two Jews disputing *the-d-the*  
New almanacs composed by seers,  
Experiments on felons ears,  
Disdainful prudes, who ceaseless ply  
The superb muscle of the eye,  
A coquette's April weather face,  
A Queenborough mayor behind his mace,

\* \* \* \* \*

Now, if untired, consider, friend,  
What I avoid to gain my end.  
I never am at Meeting seen,  
Meeting, that region of the Spleen ;  
The broken heart, the busy fiend,  
The inward call, on Spleen depend.

Law, licensed breaking of the peace,  
 To which vacation is disease;  
 A gypsy diction scarce known well  
 By th' magt, who law fortunes tell,  
 I shun; nor let it breed within  
 Anxiety and that the Spleen;  
 Law grown a forest, where perplex  
 The mazes, and the brambles vex;  
 Where its twelve verderers every day  
 Are changing still the public way:  
 Yet if we miss our path and err,  
 We grievous penalties incur  
 And wanderers tire and tear their skin.  
 And then get out where they went in.

\*       \*       \*       \*

I rail not with mock patriot grace  
 At folks, because they are in place;  
 Nor bid to praise with stallion pen,  
 Serve the ear-lechery of men;  
 But to avoid religious jars  
 The laws are my expositors,  
 Which in my doubting mind create  
 Conformity to church and state.  
 I go, pursuant to my plan,  
 To Mecca with the Caravan;  
 And think it right in common sense  
 Both for diversion and defence.

Reforming schemes are none of mine;  
 To mend the world's a vast design;  
 Like theirs, who tug in little boat,  
 To pull to them the ship afloat,  
 While to defeat their labour'd end,  
 At once both wind and stream contend  
 Success herein is seldom seen,  
 And zeal, when baffled, turns to Spleen.

Happy the man, who innocent,  
 Grieves not at ills he can't prevent;

His skiff does with the current glide,  
Not puffing pulled against the tide.  
He, paddling by the scuffling crowd,  
Sees unconcerned life's wager rowed,  
And when he can't prevent foul play,  
Enjoys the folly of the fray

By these reflections I repeal  
Each hasty promise made in zeal.  
When gospel propagators say,  
We're bound our great light to display,  
And Indian darkness drive away,  
Yet none but drunken watchmen send  
And scoundrel link-boys for that end,  
When they cry up this holy war,  
Which every christian should be for,  
Yet such as owe the law their ears,  
We find employ'd as engineers  
This view my forward zeal so shocks,  
In vain they hold the money-box.  
At such a conduct, which intends  
By vicious means such virtuous ends,  
I laugh off Spleen, and keep my pence  
From spoiling Indian innocence

\* \* \* \* \*

You, friend, like me, the trade of rhyme  
Avoid, elaborate waste of time,  
Nor are content to be undone,  
To pass for Phœbus' crazy son  
Poems, the hop-grounds of the brain,  
Afford the most uncertain gain,  
And lotteries never tempt the wise  
With blanks so many to a prize.  
I only transient visits pay,  
Meeting the Muses in my way,  
Scarce known to the fastidious dames,  
Nor skill'd to call them by their names.  
Nor can their passports in these days,  
Your profit warrant, or your praise.

On Poems by their dictates writ,  
 Critics, as sworn appraisers, sit,  
 And mere upholsterers in a trice  
 On gems and painting set a price.  
 These tailoring artists for our lays  
 Invent cramped rules, and with strait stays  
 Striving free Nature's shape to hit,  
 Emaciate sense before they fit.

•            •            •            •

Forced by soft violence of prayer  
 The blithesome goddess soothes my care,  
 I feel the deity inspire,  
 And thus she models my desire.  
 Two hundred pounds half yearly paid,  
 Annuity securely made,  
 A farm some twenty miles from town,  
 Small, tight, salubrious and my own;  
 Two maids, that never saw the town,  
 A serving man not quite a clown,  
 A boy to help to tread the mow  
 And drive while t other holds the plough;  
 A chief, of temper formed to please,  
 Fit to converse, and keep the keys;  
 And better to preserve the peace  
 Commission'd by the name of niece;  
 With understandings of a size  
 To think their master very wise.  
 May heav'n (it's all I wish for) send  
 One genial room to treat a friend,  
 Where decent cup-board, little plate,  
 Display benevolence, not state.  
 And may my humble dwelling stand  
 Upon some chosen spot of land:  
 A pond before full to the brim,  
 Where cows may cool, and geese may swim;  
 Behind, a green like velvet neat,  
 Soft to the eye, and to the feet;

Where odorous plants in evening fair  
 Breathe all around ambrosial air ,  
 From Eurus, foe to kitchen ground,  
 Fenced by a slope with bushes crowned,  
 Fit dwelling for the feathered throng,  
 Who pay their quit-rents with a song ,  
 With opening views of hill and dale,  
 Which sense and fancy too regale,  
 Where the half-cirque, which vision bounds,  
 Like amphitheatre surrounds  
 And woods impervious to the breeze,  
 Thick phalanx of embodied trees,  
 From hills through plains in dusk array  
 Extended far, repel the day

\* \* \* \* \*

Thus sheltered, free from care and strife,  
 May I enjoy a calm through life ,  
 See faction, safe in low degree,  
 As men at land see storms at sea,  
 And laugh at miserable elves,  
 Not kind, so much as to themselves,  
 Cursed with such souls of base alloy,  
 As can possess, but not enjoy ,  
 Debarred the pleasure to impart  
 By avarice, sphincter of the heart ,  
 Who wealth, hard earned by guilty cares,  
 Bequeath untouched to thankless heirs.  
 May I, with look ungloomed by guile,  
 And wearing Virtue's livery-smile,  
 Prone the distressed to relieve,  
 And little trespasses forgive,  
 With income not in Fortune's pow'r,  
 And skill to make a busy hour,  
 With trips to town life to amuse,  
 To purchase books, and hear the news,  
 To see old friends, brush off the clown,  
 And quicken taste at coming down,  
 Unhurt by sickness' blasting rage,  
 And slowly mellowing in age,

When Fate extends its gathering gripe,  
Fall off like fruit grown fully ripe  
Quit a worn being without pain,  
Perhaps to blossom soon again.

\* \* \* \*

Thus thus I steer my bark, and sail  
On even keel with gentle gale ;  
At helm I make my reason sit,  
My crew of passions all submit.  
If dark and blustering prove some nights,  
Philosophy puts forth her lights ;  
Experience holds the cautious glass,  
To shun the breakers, as I pass,  
And frequent throws the wary lead,  
To see what dangers may be hid :  
And once in seven years I'm seen  
At Bath or Tunbridge, to career.  
Though pleased to see the dolphins play  
I mind my compass and my way  
With store sufficient for relief,  
And wisely still prepared to reef,  
Nor wanting the dispersive bowl  
Of cloudy weather in the soul,  
I make (may heav'n propitious send  
Such wind and weather to the end)  
Neither becalmed, nor over blown,  
Life's voyage to the world unknown.

#### ON BARCLAY'S APOLOGY FOR THE QUAKERS.

These sheets primæval doctrines yield,  
Where revelation is reveal'd ;  
Soul phlegm from literal feeding bred,  
Systems lethargic to the head  
They purge, and yield a diet thin,  
That turns to gospel-chyle within.

Truth sublimate may here be seen  
 Extracted from the parts terrene.  
 In these is shewn, how men obtain  
 What of Prometheus poets feign  
 To scripture-plainness dress is brought,  
 And speech, apparel to the thought.  
 They hiss from instinct at red coats,  
 And war, whose work is cutting throats,  
 Forbid, and press the law of love.  
 Breathing the spirit of the dove.  
 Lucrative doctrines they detest,  
 As manufactured by the priest,  
 And throw down turnpikes, where we pay  
 For stuff, which never mends the way,  
 And tithes, a Jewish tax, reduce,  
 And frank the gospel for our use.  
 They sable standing armies break,  
 But the militia useful make  
 Since all unhired may preach and pray,  
 Taught by these rules as well as they,  
 Rules, which, when truths themselves reveal,  
 Bid us to follow what we feel.

\* \* \* \* \*

Well-natured, happy shade, forgive !  
 Like you I think, but cannot live.  
 Thy scheme requires the world's contempt,  
 That, from dependence life exempt,  
 And constitution fram'd so strong,  
 This world's worst climate cannot wrong  
 Not such my lot, not Fortune's brat,  
 I live by pulling off the hat,  
 Compelled by station every hour  
 To bow to images of power,  
 And in life's busy scenes immersed,  
 See better things, and do the worst.

Eloquent Want, whose reasons sway,  
 And make ten thousand truths give way,

While I your scheme with pleasure trace,  
Draws near and stares me in the face.  
Consider well your state she cries,  
Like others kneel, that you may rise;  
Hold doctrines, by no scruples vexed,  
To which preferment is annexed,  
Nor madly prove, where all depends,  
Idolatry upon your friends.  
See how you like my rueful face  
Such you must wear if out of place.  
Cracked is your brain to turn recluse  
Without one farthing out at use.  
They who have lands, and safe bank stock,  
With faith so founded on a rock,  
May give a rich invention ease,  
And construe scripture how they please.  
The honoured prophet, that of old  
Used heav'n's high counsels to unfold,  
Did, more than courier angels, greet  
The crows, that brought him bread and meat.

## JOHN DYER

[BORN at Aberglasney, Caermarthenshire, 1698 or 1699, died 1758  
*Grongar Hill* was published 1726, *The Ruins of Rome*, 1740, *The Fleece*,  
1757]

'The subject of the *Fleece*, sir, cannot be made poetical. How can a man write poetically of serges and druggets?' So, in his way of prompt finality, pronounced Johnson the dictator. Yet Akenside, whose poetical aims were sufficiently remote from the common, had declared that he would regulate his opinion of the reigning taste by the fate of Dyer's *Fleece*, 'if that were ill received he should not think it any longer reasonable to expect fame from excellence.' Gray ventured to brave the elegant disdain of Horace Walpole by affirming that 'Mr Dyer has more of poetry in his imagination than almost any of our number'. And one in our own century, of loftier genius than Gray, looking back from his Westmoreland solitudes to his humbler brother poet among the Cambrian hills, has left his protest against the injustice of 'hasty Fame' in her neglect of Dyer

'Yet pure and powerful minds, hearts meek and still,  
A grateful few shall love thy modest Lay,  
Long as the shepherd's bleating flock shall stray  
O'er naked Snowdon's wide aerial waste,  
Long as the thrush shall pipe on Grongar Hill'

The power of hills was not on Johnson, Fleet Street, with its roar, had more music for his ear than the piping of a thrush or the tender clamour of the mother-ewes

*Grongar Hill*, and *The Country Walk*, appeared in Poetical Miscellanies of the year 1726, the same year that saw the publica-

tion of Thomson's *Winter*. It was the year in which Pope was imagining his goddess of Dulness, as she surveyed through fog her long succession of Grub Street children. From remote Scotland and from Southern Wales came a gift to English poetry which neither Grub Street nor Twickenham could bestow. While Pope, a paladin in ruffles and periwig, was doing to death by exquisite rapier-thrusts the swarming hosts of Dulness, his own position was threatened unawares. That poetry of external nature which was to alienate for a season the general heart from such poetry as his, was already inaugurated by the youthful singers of *Winter* and of *Grongar Hill*.

Dyer had been for a time pupil to the painter Richardson, and master and pupil may have laid down their brushes now and again to con over some passage of Milton, whom they both knew well and honoured. In Dyer's love of landscape there is something of the painter's feeling; he loves a wide prospect, diversified by stream and wood, backed by blue aerial steeps solemnly vast; the effect is heightened if the landscape include the ragged walls of some crumbling castle, or some peasant's smoky nest leaning against its gnarled tree. There remains but to add a human figure or two—an old man white bearded, in weed ragged and brown, leaning on his spade in the little garden, or a fisher in the willow shade,

Who with the eagle in his hand  
Swings the nibbling fry to land.

The poetry of ruins was not reserved for the romantic second half of the century. It is Dyer who describes

The spacious plain  
Of Sarum, spread like ocean's boundless round,  
Where solitary Stonehenge grey with moss,  
Ruin of ages, nods.

And Johnson could not withhold his admiration from some lines conceived among Rome's dilapidating edifices.

The Pilgrim oft  
At dead of night, mid his oraison hears  
Aghast the voice of time, departing towers,  
Tumbling all precipitate down dashed,  
Rattling around loud thundering to the moon.

But Dyer, as even these lines show, is not a painter who would constrain words to be the medium of his art, he is a poet. He has a heart that listens, an eye that loves, his landscape is full of living change, of tender incident, of the melody of breeze and bird and stream. Here under glossy-rinded beeches 'the burrowing rabbit turns the dust', here the new-dropped lamb,

'Tottering with weakness by his mother's side  
Feels the fresh world about him',

here the husbandman returning at eve to his 'little smiling cottage warm embowered,' meets his rosy children at the door,

'Prattling their welcomes, and his honest wife,  
With good brown cake and bacon slice, intent  
To cheer his hunger after labour hard.'

Dyer loves solitary musing on some gentle hillside, and sometimes moralises amiably on the gains of a private life remote from men,

'Grass and flowers Quiet treads'

But it is one of his distinctions that he never really opposed nature and human society, as poets of Rousseau's part of the century were wont to oppose them, and he not only pays homage to trade in the way of easy platitudes, but really receives thrills of poetic excitement from the life of man in commerce, its force, its vividness, its picturesqueness, its variety. 'Tis art and toil,' he exclaims, 'give nature value.' Could he choose his lot it would be on some healthful waste, 'far from a Lord's loath'd neighbourhood', yet he would not be neighbourless, for he loves his toiling fellow-men, and if the soil were coarse and sterile, it should be so only 'till forced to flourish and subdued by me.'

The farmer still collecting his scattered sheaves under the full-orbed harvest moon, the strong-armed rustic plunging in the flood an unshorn ewe, the carter on the dusty road beside his nodding wain, the maiden at her humming wheel, delight Dyer's imagination no more than do the Sheffield smiths near the glaring mass 'clattering their heavy hammers down by turns,' the builder, trowel in hand, at whose spell Manchester rises and spreads like Carthage before the eyes of Æneas, the keen-eyed factor inspecting his bales, the bending porter on the wharf where masts crowd thick. The poet's ancestors, as he is pleased to record in verse, were

weavers, who, flying from the rage of superstition, brought the loom to

that soft tract  
Of Cambria, deep-embayed, Dimetian land,  
By green hills fenced, by ocean a murmur lull'd.

From them he obtained a goodly heritage—his love of freedom and his love of industry. He honoured traffic, the friend to wedded love ; he honoured England for her independence and her mighty toil ; America, for her vast possibilities of well being. He pleaded against the horrors of the slave trade. He courted the favour of no lord. And, in an age of city poets, he found his inspiration on the hillside and by the stream.

EDWARD DOWDEN

## GRONGAR HILL.

Silent Nymph, with curious eye!  
Who, the purple evening, lie  
On the mountain's lonely van,  
Beyond the noise of busy man,  
Painting fair the form of things,  
While the yellow linnet sings,  
Or the tuneful nightingale  
Charms the forest with her tale,  
Come with all thy various hues,  
Come, and aid thy sister Muse,  
Now while Phœbus riding high  
Gives lustre to the land and sky!  
Grongar Hill invites my song,  
Draw the landskip bright and strong,  
Grongar, in whose mossy cells  
Sweetly musing Quiet dwells,  
Grongar, in whose silent shade,  
For the modest Muses made,  
So oft I have, the evening still,  
At the fountain of a rill,  
Sate upon a flowery bed,  
With my hand beneath my head,  
While strayed my eyes o'er Towy's flood,  
Over mead, and over wood,  
From house to house, from hill to hill,  
'Till Contemplation had her fill.

About his chequered sides I wind,  
And leave his brooks and meads behind,  
And groves, and grottoes where I lay,  
And vistles shooting beams of day.  
Wide and wider spreads the vale,  
As circles on a smooth canal.

The mountains round, unhappy fate !  
Sooner or later of all height,  
Withdraw their summits from the skies,  
And lessen as the others rise  
Still the prospect wider spreads,  
Adds a thousand woods and meads,  
Still it widens, widens still,  
And sinks the newly risen hill.

Now, I gain the mountain's brow  
What a landskip lies below !  
No clouds, no vapours intervene,  
But the gay the open scene  
Does the face of nature show  
In all the hues of heaven's bow !  
And, swelling to embrace the light,  
Spreads around beneath the sight.

Old castles on the cliffs arise,  
Proudly towering in the skies ;  
Rushing from the woods, the spires  
Seem from hence ascending fires ;  
Half his beams Apollo sheds  
On the yellow mountain heads,  
Gilds the fleeces of the flocks,  
And glitters on the broken rocks.

Below me trees unnumbered rise,  
Beautiful in various dyes  
The gloomy pine, the poplar blue,  
The yellow beech, the sable yew  
The slender fir that taper grows,  
The sturdy oak with broad-spread boughs ;  
And beyond the purple grove,  
Haunt of Phillis, queen of love,  
Gandy as the opening dawn,  
Lies a long and level lawn  
On which a dark hill, steep and high,  
Holds and charms the wandering eye.  
Deep are his feet in Towy's flood,  
His sides are cloth'd with waving wood,

And ancient towers crown his brow,  
That cast an awful look below,  
Whose ragged walls the ivy creeps,  
And with her arms from falling keeps,  
So both a safety from the wind  
On mutual dependence find

'Tis now the raven's bleak abode,  
'Tis now th' apartment of the toad,  
And there the fox securely feeds,  
And there the poisonous adder breeds  
Conceal'd in ruins, moss and weeds,  
While, ever and anon, there falls  
Huge heaps of hoary mouldered walls  
Yet time has seen, that lifts the low,  
And level lays the lofty brow,  
Has seen this broken pile compleat,  
Big with the vanity of state,  
But transient is the smile of fate!  
A little rule, a little sway,  
A sun beam in a winter's day,  
Is all the proud and mighty have  
Between the cradle and the grave.

And see the rivers how they run,  
Thro' woods and meads, in shade and sun  
Sometimes swift, sometimes slow,  
Wave succeeding wave, they go  
A various journey to the deep,  
Like human life to endless sleep!  
Thus is nature's vesture wrought,  
To instruct our wandering thought;  
Thus she dresses green and gay,  
To disperse our cares away

Ever charming, ever new,  
When will the landskip tire the view!  
The fountain's fall, the river's flow.  
The woody valleys, warm and low,  
The windy summit, wild and high,  
Roughly rushing on the sky,

The pleasant seat, the ruined tower,  
The naked rock, the shady bower;  
The town and village, dome and farm,  
Each gives each a double charm,  
As pearls upon an Æthiop's arm.

See on the mountain's southern side,  
Where the prospect opens wide,  
Where the evening gilds the tide;  
How close and small the hedges lie!  
What streaks of meadows cross the eye!  
A step methinks may pass the stream,  
So little distant dangers seem;  
So we mistake the future's face,  
Eyed thro' Hope's deluding glass;  
*As yon summits soft and fair*  
Clad in colours of the air  
Which to those who journey near  
Barren, brown, and rough appear;  
Still we tread the same coarse way;  
The present's still a cloudy day

O may I with myself agree,  
And never covet what I see;  
Content me with an humble shade,  
My passions tamed, my wishes laid;  
For while our wishes wildly roll,  
We banish quiet from the soul:  
'Tis thus the busy beat the air;  
And misers gather wealth and care.

Now ev'n now, my joys run high,  
As on the mountain-turf I lie;  
While the wanton Zephyr sings,  
And in the vale perfumes his wings;  
While the waters murmur deep  
While the shepherd charms his sheep;  
While the birds unbounded fly  
And with musick fill the sky  
Now ev'n now my joys run high.

Be full, ye courts, be great who will;  
Search for Peace with all your skill

Open wide the lofty door,  
Seek her on the marble floor,  
In vain you search, she is not there ,  
In vain ye search the domes of care !  
Grass and flowers Quiet treads,  
On the meads, and mountain-heads,  
Along with Pleasure, close allied,  
Ever by each other's side  
And often, by the murmuring rill,  
Hears the thrush, while all is still,  
Within the groves of Grongar Hill

FROM 'THE FLEECE.' Bk. I

Ah gentle shepherd, thine the lot to tend,  
Of all, that feel distress, the most assail'd,  
Feeble, defenceless lenient be thy care  
But spread around thy tenderest diligence  
In flow'ry spring-time, when the new-dropt lamb,  
Tottering with weakness by his mothers side,  
Feels the fresh world about him , and each thorn,  
Hillock, or furrow, trips his feeble feet  
O guard his meek sweet innocence from all  
Th' innumerable ills, that rush around his life ;  
Mark the quick kite, with beak and talons prone,  
Circling the skies to snatch him from the plain ,  
Observe the lurking crows , beware the brake,  
There the sly fox the careless minute waits ,  
Nor trust thy neighbour's dog, nor earth, nor sky  
Thy bosom to a thousand cares divide.  
Eurus oft flings his hail , the tardy fields  
Pay not their promised food , and oft the dam  
O'er her weak twins with empty udder mourns,  
Or fails to guard, when the bold bird of prey  
Alights, and hops in many turns around,  
And tires her also turning to her aid  
Be nimble, and the weakest in thine arms

Gently convey to the warm cote, and oft,  
 Between the lark's note and the nightingale's,  
 His hungry bleating still with tepid milk  
 In this soft office may thy children join,  
 And charitable habits learn in sport  
 Nor yield him to himself ere vernal airs  
 Sprinkle thy little croft with daisy flowers :  
 Nor yet forget him life has risingills :  
 Various as ether is the pastoral care  
 Through slow experience, by a patient breast,  
 The whole long lesson gradual is attained,  
 By precept after precept, oft received  
 With deep attention : such as Nuceus sings  
 To the full vale near Soar's enamour'd brook,  
 While all is silence sweet Hindlean swain !  
 Whom rude obscurity severely clasps :  
 The muse, howe'er will deck thy simple cell  
 With purple violets and primrose flowers,  
 Well-pleased thy faithful lessons to repay

\* \* \* \* \*

Now, jolly swains, the harvest of your cares  
 Prepare to reap, and seek the sounding caves  
 Of high Brigantium, where, by ruddy flames,  
 Vulcan's strong sons with nervous arm around  
 The steady anvil and the glaring mass,  
 Clatter their heavy hammers down by turns,  
 Flattening the steel ; from their rough hands receive  
 The sharpened instrument, that from the flock  
 Severs the fleece. If verdant elder spreads  
 Her silver flowers ; if humble daisies yield  
 To yellow crow foot, and luxuriant grass,  
 Gay shearing time approaches. First, howe'er,  
 Drive to the double fold, upon the brim  
 Of a clear river gently drive the flock,  
 And plunge them one by one into the flood  
 Plunged in the flood, not long the struggler sinks,  
 With his white flakes, that glisten thro' the tide ;

The sturdy rustic, in the middle wave,  
Awaits to seize him rising , one arm bears  
His lifted head above the limpid stream,  
While the full clammy fleece the other laves  
Around, laborious, with repeated toil ,  
And then resigns him to the sunny bank,  
Where, bleating loud, he shakes his dripping locks

## ROBERT BLAIR.

[ROBERT BLAIR was born at Edinburgh in 1699. He became a minister and was presented to the living of Athelstaneford in Haddingtonshire, where most of his life was passed. He died there in 1746. *The Grave* was published at Edinburgh in 1743.]

Blair's singular little poem which has perhaps been more widely read than any other poetical production of a writer who wrote no other poetry was, it is said, rejected by several London publishers on the ground that it was 'too heavy for the times.' As its introducer was Dr Watts, it is not likely that he suggested it to any but serious members of the trade. *The Grave* thus adds one to the tolerably long list of books respecting the chances of which professional judgment has been hopelessly out. It acquired popularity almost as soon as it was published, and retained it for at least a century indeed its date is not yet gone by in certain circles. Long after its author's death it obtained an additional and probably a lasting hold on a new kind of taste by the fact of Blake's illustrating it. The artist's designs indeed were, as he expresses it in the beautiful Dedication to Queen Charlotte, rather 'visions that his soul had seen' than representations of anything directly contained in Blair's verse. But that verse itself is by no means to be despised. Technically its only fault is the use and abuse of the redundant syllable. The quality of Blair's blank verse is in every respect rather moulded upon dramatic than upon purely poetical models, and he shows little trace of imitation either of Milton, or of his contemporary Thomson. Whether his studies—contrary to the wont of Scotch divines at that time—had really been much directed to the drama, I cannot say; but the perusal of his poem certainly suggests such a conclusion, not merely the licence just mentioned, but the generally declamatory and rhetorical tone

helping to produce the impression The matter of the poem is good. General plan it has none, but in so short a composition a general plan is hardly wanted. It abounds with forcible and original ideas expressed in vigorous and unconventional phraseology, nor is it likely nowadays that this phraseology will strike readers, as it struck the delicate critics of the eighteenth century, as being 'vulgar' Vigorous single lines are numerous, and it is at least as much a tribute to the vigour of the poem as to its popularity, that many of its phrases have worked their way into current speech Nor is it difficult to produce sustained passages, the effect of which is marred only by the ugly technical fault already noticed The poem naturally invites comparison with the *Night Thoughts* In depth of meaning it is probably the inferior of Young's work But its shortness is very much in its favour, as also is the absence of conventionality which distinguishes it, if we except a little stock satire about the trappings of the grave, &c. The wonder is however, not that Blair has sometimes fallen into the use of the cut and dried, but that he has so often avoided it To have written a poem of seven or eight hundred lines on such a subject, which after the lapse of nearly a century and a half can be read with pleasure and even some admiration, is something, perhaps it is something by no means inconsiderable. It is due beyond all doubt to the fact that Blair had the specially poetic faculty of saying old things in a new way There is almost always something novel in his dressing up of his images and a suggestive unhackneyedness in their expression It is sufficient to read the last four lines of the poem to perceive this.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY

[From *The Grave*.]

SELF MURDER.

Self Murder! name it not our island's shame,  
That makes her the reproach of neighbouring states.  
Shall nature, swerving from her earliest dictate,  
Self preservation, fall by her own act?  
Forbid it, Heaven!—let not upon disgust  
The shameless hand be foully crimsoned o'er  
With blood of its own lord.—Dreadful attempt!  
Just reeking from self slaughter, in a rage,  
To rush into the presence of our Judge  
As if we challenged him to do his worst  
And mattered not his wrath unheard-of tortures  
Must be reserved for these, these herd together  
The common damned shun their society,  
And look upon themselves as fiends less foul.  
Our time is fix'd and all our days are numbered,  
How long, how short we know not this we know  
Duty requires we calmly wait the summons,  
Nor dare to stir till Heaven shall give permission,  
Like sentries that must keep their destined stand  
And wait the appointed hour till they're relieved.  
Those only are the brave that keep their ground,  
And keep it to the last. To run away  
Is but a coward's trick. To run away  
From this world's ills, that at the very worst  
Will soon blow o'er, thinking to mend ourselves  
By boldly venturing on a world unknown  
And plunging headlong in the dark—'tis mad,  
No phrenzy half so desperate as this.

OMNES EODEM COGIMUR.

On this side and on that men see their friends  
Drop off like leaves in autumn, yet launch out

Into fantastic schemes, which the long livers  
In the world's hale and undegenerate days  
Could scarce have leisure for Fools that we are,  
Never to think of death and of ourselves  
At the same time as if to learn to die  
Were no concern of ours Oh ! more than sottish  
For creatures of a day in gamesome mood  
To frolic on Eternity's dread brink  
Unapprehensive, when, for aught we know,  
The very first swoln surge shall sweep us in.  
Think we or think we not, time hurries on  
With a resistless unremitting stream,  
Yet treads more soft than e'er did midnight thief  
That slides his hand under the miser's pillow  
And carries off his prize. What is this world ?  
What but a spacious burial-field unwall'd  
Strew'd with death's spoils, the spoils of animals  
Savage and tame, and full of dead men's bones  
The very turf on which we tread once lived,  
And we that live must lend our carcases  
To cover our own offspring ; in their turns  
They too must cover theirs—'tis here all meet.  
The shivering Icelfander and sunburnt Moor,  
Men of all climes who never met before,  
And of all creeds, the Jew, the Turk, the Christian.  
Here the proud prince, and favourite yet prouder,  
His sovereign's keeper and the people's scourge,  
Are huddled out of sight.—Here lie abashed  
The great negotiators of the earth,  
And celebrated masters of the balance,  
Deep read in stratagems and wiles of courts ,  
Now vain their treaty skill.—Death scorns to treat.  
Here the o'erloaded slave flings down his burden  
From his galled shoulders, and when the stern tyrant,  
With all his guards and tools of power about him  
Is meditating new unheard-of hardships,  
Mocks his short arm, and quick as thought escapes  
Where tyrants vex not and the weary rest.

## THE RESURRECTION.

Nor shall it hope in vain the time draws on  
When not a single spot of burial earth,  
Whether on land or in the spacious sea,  
But must give back its long committed trust  
Inviolatè, and faithfully shall these  
Make up the full account, not the least atom  
Embezzled or mislaid of the whole tale.  
Each soul shall have a body ready furnished,  
And each shall have his own. Hence, ye profane!  
Ask not how this can be. Sure the same power  
That reared the piece at first and took it down  
Can reassemble the loose scattered parts  
And put them as they were. Almighty God  
Has done much more, nor is his arm impaired  
With length of days, and what he can he will.  
His faithfulness stands bound to see it done.  
When the dread trumpet sounds, the slumbering dust,  
Not unattentive to the call, shall wake,  
And every joint possess its proper place  
With a new elegance of form unknown  
To its first state. Nor shall the conscious soul  
Mistake its partner but, amidst the crowd  
Singling its other half, into its arms  
Shall rush with all the impatience of a man  
That's new come home, who having long been absent  
With haste runs over ev'ry different room  
In pain to see the whole. Thrice happy meeting!  
Nor time nor death shall part them ever more.  
'Tis but a night, a long and moonless night,  
We make the grave our bed, and then are gone.

Thus at the shut of even the weary bird  
Leaves the wide air and, in some lonely brake,  
Cowers down and dozes till the dawn of day  
Then claps his well-fledged wings and bears away

## EDWARD YOUNG.

[THE author of the *Night Thoughts* was born at Upham in Hampshire in 1684, and died on the 12th of April 1765. *The Last Day* was published in 1713, and was soon followed by *The Force of Religion*. Young's unlucky tendency to flattery and toadyism early showed itself in many small pieces to persons of rank which cannot be said to have been regularly published until long afterwards. In 1719 *Busiris*, his first tragedy, was performed, and in the same year the *Letter to Tickell on the Death of Addison* and the *Paraphrase of the Book of Job* appeared. *The Revēge* followed in 1721. The satires composing *The Universal Passion* made their appearance during the course of 1725 and the following three years. In 1728 they were collectively published. Meanwhile the accession of George II had been hailed with the so called *Odes to Ocean, &c*. *The Brothers*, a tragedy, coincided pretty nearly with this. In 1730 appeared the *Imperium Pelagi*, and two *Epistles to Pope*. Some more Pindarics followed. The first *Night Thought* was published in 1742, the last in 1744. Of Young's remaining works, *Resignation*, which appeared three years before his death, need alone be mentioned.]

Except Wordsworth, Young is probably the most unequal of English poets. The difference between his best work and his worst is so great as to be almost unintelligible, and it is fair to him to say that he seems to have been aware of this. When his collected poems were reprinted, a large number were by his express direction left out. Publication however constitutes, as it has been well observed, in one sense an unpardonable sin, and in estimating Young it is necessary to take the *Odes* and the *Imperium Pelagi* into consideration as well as the *Night Thoughts* and the *Last Day*. Of the class represented by the first-named works it may be said that hardly any worse poetry has ever been written. There is scarcely a stanza of the so-called *Odes* which does not read like an admir-

able and intentional burlesque. The author seems by his rhymes to have had no ear at all, and his gross and fulsome flattery is unspeakably nauseous. Of this latter peculiarity indeed even his best work contains but too many instances. The fine passage, soon to be quoted, from the *Last Day* is disfigured by the insertion in the midst of it of a clumsy and foolish panegyric on Queen Anne, which any one but an eighteenth-century divine would have felt to be not only intrinsically in bad taste, but hopelessly inappropriate to the case.

The depths to which Young sinks at his worst are however compensated by the heights at which at his best he arrives. If poetry and poets could be judged by single lines, there are few save the highest who could safely challenge comparison with Young. He had an astonishing fertility of thought of a certain kind, and a corresponding richness of expression. Nor were his powers confined, as it has been asserted, to the production of gloomy epigram. He stands pre-eminent among artists of blank verse, and a critic might well have asked him, as Jeffrey asked Macaulay where he got his style from. The earlier eighteenth century is indeed remarkable for its mould of blank verse. Considering that though Young was a much older man than Thomson he did not produce his great work until many years after the appearance of *Winter* it may be that *The Seasons* exercised some influence over him but the influence was scarcely that of imitation. The different uses to which the two instruments were put may perhaps in some measure account for the difference of their sound. Both have in common the tendency to florid language and to antithesis which the Popian couplet had made popular both use and indeed abuse the effect of strongly contrasted lights and shades. But Young, probably owing to his dramatic studies, is much more rhetorical than Thomson. Not a few passages in the *Night Thoughts* especially that remarkable one in the Third Night about dying friends, where the confusion of metaphors does not obscure the grandeur of the verse, are of the finest tragic mould. It was inevitable that in the hands of a man of such uncritical taste as Young this tragic quality should often degenerate into mere declamation. The inequality indeed which is so characteristic of him exists even in detached passages of very small extent, so that it is difficult if not impossible to select any in which the taste shall not be offended. The *Night Thoughts* has accordingly long ceased to be the popular book it once was. As a poet of moral ideas however Young will always deserve attention,

independently of the excellence of his versification. The famous passage on Procrastination, which, hackneyed as it is, is so decidedly his masterpiece, that it cannot be left out in any selection from his works, is in its way not to be surpassed, and its excellence fully accounts for the popularity of Young in a century such as the eighteenth, which, whatever its practice might be, was, in theory, nothing if not moralist. This popularity, as is pretty generally known, spread to France, where Young long had many fervent admirers, though he is probably to a great extent chargeable with the bad repute of England for spleen. Blake's remarkable illustrations also add considerable interest of the accidental kind to the book. Those of the minor poems which deserve notice at all are not dissimilar in characteristics to the *Night Thoughts*. The satires have almost as great, though scarcely so original a merit as these latter, and both in the *Last Day* and the *Job* fine and striking passages abound.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY

## FROM THE LAST DAY BOOK I.

Sooner or later, in some future date,  
 (A dreadful secret in the book of Fate)  
 This hour for aught all human wisdom knows,  
 Or when ten thousand harvests more have rose;  
 When scenes are changed on this revolving Earth,  
 Old empires fall, and give new empires birth  
 While other Bourbons rule in other lands,  
 And, (if man's sin forbids not) other Annes;  
 While the still busy world is treading o'er  
 The paths they trod five thousand years before,  
 Thoughtless as those who now life's mazes run,  
 Of earth dissolved, or an extinguished sun;  
 (Ye sublunary worlds, awake, awake!  
 Ye rulers of the nation, hear and shake)  
 Thick clouds of darkness shall arise on day;  
 In sudden night all Earth's dominions lay;  
 Impetuous winds the scatter'd forests rend;  
 Eternal mountains, like their cedars, bend;  
 The valleys yawn, the troubled ocean roar  
 And break the bondage of his wonted shore;  
 A sanguine stain the silver moon o'erspread;  
 Darkness the circle of the sun invade;  
 From inmost Heaven incessant thunders roll  
 And the strong echo bound from pole to pole.

## THE OLD COQUETTE.

[From *Satire V* on *Women*.]

'But adoration! give me something more,  
 Cries Lycé on the borders of threescore.  
 Nought treads so silent as the foot of Time:  
 Hence we mistake our autumn for our prime.

'Tis greatly wise to know before we're told  
The melancholy news that we grow old.  
Autumnal Lycé carries in her face  
*Memento mori* to each public place.  
O how your beating breast a mistress warms  
Who looks through spectacles to see your charms,  
While rival undertakers hover round  
And with his spade the sexton marks the ground !  
Intent not on her own, but others' doom,  
She plans new conquests and defrauds the tomb  
In vain the cock has summoned sprites away,  
She walks at noon and blasts the bloom of day  
Gay rainbow silks her mellow charms unfold,  
And nought of Lycé but herself is old.  
Her grizzled locks assume a smirking grace,  
And art has levelled her deep furrowed face  
Her strange demand no mortal can approve,  
We'll ask her blessing, but can't ask her love.  
She grants, indeed, a lady may decline  
(All ladies but herself) at ninety-nine.

#### PROCRASTINATION

[From *The Complaint, Night I*]

By nature's law, what may be, may be now ,  
There's no prerogative in human hours  
In human hearts what bolder thought can rise  
Than man's presumption on to-morrow's dawn ?  
Where is to-morrow ? In another world.  
For numbers this is certain , the reverse  
Is sure to none , and yet on this perhaps,  
This peradventure, infamous for lies,  
As on a rock of adamant, we build  
Our mountain hopes, spin out eternal schemes  
As we the fatal sisters could out-spin,  
And big with life's futurities, expire.  
Not e'en Philander had bespoke his shroud,

Nor had he cause a warning was denied  
How many fall as sudden, not as safe  
As sudden, though for years admonish'd home!  
Of human ills the last extreme beware  
Beware, Lorenzo, a slow sudden death.  
How dreadful that deliberate surprise!  
Be wise to-day 'tis madness to defer;  
Next day the fatal precedent will plead;  
Thus on, till wisdom is push'd out of life.  
Procrastination is the thief of time;  
Year after year it steals, till all are fled,  
And to the mercies of a moment leaves  
The vast concerns of an eternal scene.  
If not so frequent, would not this be strange?  
That 'tis so frequent, this is stranger still.  
Of man's miraculous mistakes this bears  
The palm, 'That all men are about to live,  
For ever on the brink of being born.  
All pay themselves the compliment to think  
They one day shall not drivel and their pride  
On this reversion takes up ready praise;  
At least, their own; their future selves applaud  
How excellent that life they ne'er will lead.  
Time lodg'd in their own hands is folly's vault;  
That lodg'd in fate's to wisdom they consign.  
The thing they can't but purpose, they postpone.  
'Tis not in folly not to scorn a fool,  
And scarce in human wisdom to do more.  
All promise is poor dilatory man,  
And that through every stage when young indeed  
In full content we sometimes nobly rest,  
Unanxious for ourselves; and only wish,  
As duteous sons our fathers were more wise.  
At thirty man suspects himself a fool,  
Knows it at forty and reforms his plan;  
At fifty chides his infamous delay  
Pushes his prudent purpose to resolve;  
In all the magnanimity of thought  
Resolves, and re-resolves, then dies the same.

## THE DEATH OF FRIENDS.

[From *Night III*]

Our dying friends come o'er us like a cloud,  
To damp our brainless ardours, and abate  
That glare of life which often blinds the wise  
Our dying friends are pioneers, to smooth  
Our rugged pass to death, to break those bars  
Of terror and abhorrence Nature throws  
'Cross our obstructed way, and thus to make  
Welcome as safe, our port from every storm  
Each friend by fate snatched from us is a plume,  
Pluck'd from the wing of human vanity,  
Which makes us stoop from our aerial heights  
And, damp'd with omen of our own decease,  
On drooping pinions of ambition lower'd,  
Just skim Earth's surface, ere we break it up,  
O'er putrid earth to scratch a little dust  
And save the world a nuisance. Smitten friends  
Are angels sent on errands full of love,  
For us they languish and for us they die,  
And shall they languish, shall they die, in vain?  
Ungrateful, shall we grieve their hovering shades  
Which wait the revolution in our hearts?  
Shall we disdain their silent soft address,  
Their posthumous advice and pious prayer?  
Senseless as herds that graze their hallow'd graves,  
Tread under-foot their agonies and groans,  
Frustrate their anguish and destroy their deaths?

## ASPIRATION.

[From *Night IV*]

O thou great arbiter of life and death,  
Nature's immortal, unmaterial sun,  
Whose all-prolific beam late call'd me forth  
From darkness, teeming darkness where I lay,

The worm's inferior, and in rank beneath  
The dust I tread on, high to bear my brow,  
To drink the spirit of the golden day  
And triumph in existence; and could know  
No motive, but my bliss and hast ordain'd  
A rise in blessing, with the patriarch's joy  
Thy call I follow to the land unknown.  
I trust in thee and know in whom I trust;  
Or life, or death, is equal neither weighs  
All weight in this—O let me live to thee!

## THE STREAM OF LIFE

[From *Night V*]

Is it, that life has sown her joys so thick  
We can't thrust in a single care between?  
Is it, that life has such a swarm of cares  
The thought of death can't enter for the throng?  
Is it, that time steals on with downy feet,  
Nor wakes indulgence from her golden dream?  
To day is so like yesterday it cheats;  
We take the lying slater for the same.  
Life glides away Lorenzo, like a brook;  
For ever changing, unperceived the change.  
In the same brook none ever bathed him twice,  
To the same life none ever twice awoke.  
We call the brook the same the same we think  
Our life, though still more rapid in its flow;  
Nor mark the much, irrevocably laps'd  
And mingled with the sea. Or shall we say  
(Retaining still the brook to bear us on)  
That life is like a vessel on the stream?  
In life embark'd we smoothly down the tide  
Of time descend, but not on time intent,  
Amused, unconscious of the gliding wave;  
Till on a sudden we perceive a shock;  
We start, awake, look out; what see we there?  
Our brittle bark is burst on Charon's shore.

## JOHN BYROM.

[JOHN BYROM, born in 1691 at Kearsale, near Manchester, was educated partly at Merchant Taylors' and partly at Trinity College, Cambridge. For some time he read medicine. Afterwards he practised and taught stenography. Then the paternal estate fell in to him, and he removed from London to Manchester, where he lived in great repute for many years, and died in 1763. His poems were published at Manchester in two volumes.]

Byrom's is a figure rather curious than notable, rather amiable than striking. He had many turns and accomplishments, and many holds upon life. He loved learning, for instance, and had scholarship enough to write with point upon scholarly subjects. Again, it is certain that he was a man who could love, for he gave over medicine and the chance of medical honours merely to follow up and win the lady he was wooing to wife. Then, as became Weston's successful rival, the teacher who had improved upon Weston's own system, and had Hoadley and Chesterfield for his pupils, he was keenly interested in stenography, and not only lectured on it to his classes (his lectures, by the way, are said to have been full of matter and of wit), but read papers about it before the Royal Society. Also, he was curiously versed in theology and philosophical divinity, he held advanced opinions on the dogmas of predestination and imputed righteousness, he is known for a disciple of William Law, a student of Malebranche and Madame Bourignon, a follower of Jacob Boehmen, for whose sake he learned German, and some of whose discourse he was at the pains of running into English verse. And above all was he addicted to letters and the practice of what he was pleased to think poetry. Add to this, that he was a good and cheerful talker, whose piety was not always pun-proof ('*Hic jacet Doctor Byfield,*

volatilis olim, tandem fixus') but who was capable on occasion of right and genuine epigram, and the picture is complete. As revealed in it, Byron is the very type and incarnation of the ingenious amateur

Verse was his organ he wrote it more easily and delightedly than prose. From his schooldays onwards, when, as he declares, a line of metre was more to him than a dozen themes, down to the last hours of his life,

Him, numbers flowing in a measured time,  
Him, sweetest grace of English verse, the rhyme,  
Choice epithet and smooth descriptive line,  
Conspiring all to finish one design,  
Smit with delight —

and as that delight usually took on palpable shape, it appears to us expressed in more epistles, songs, pastorals, hymns, essays, satires and epigrams, than nowadays one cares to consider. Nothing came amiss to Byron in the way of subject. He was interested in everything, and said his say about everything and that say was always in metre. It was alike in metre that he sang the praises of Joanna Bentley the Phoebe of his first pastoral, and did battle with Comberbatch in the good cause of Rhyme against Blank Verse; alike in metre that he recorded the gaieties of Tunbridge and the dangers of the Epping stage, the grisly glories of the heroic Figg—'so fierce and sedate'—and the solemn charm of Eastertide and the Nativity. It was in metre that he confuted Middleton, differed from Hervey, emended Horace and Homer, discoursed on the nature of Pentecost, expounded William Law and explained the Mystical Cobbler. It was in metre that he anatomised beaux and astrologers, made fables and apologies and epigrams, criticised verses and theologies, spoke breaking up addresses, painted the free and happy workman, and set forth the kindred mysteries of poesy and shorthand. He prattled incessantly and always in numbers. Not otherwise than in a copy of verses could he define the nature and characteristics of enthusiasm: not otherwise could he submit to the Royal Society his theory that George the Cappadocian had somehow been foisted into the place of Gregory the Roman as England's patron saint. To respect him it is really necessary to remember that he wrote chiefly for his own amusement and his friends', and published but a little of the much that he produced.

It is evident that he had read Prior, though not to the best advantage, it is evident, too, that he had read not only Pope, but the metaphysical poets as well, and the poem of *Careless Content*, here given, is so good an imitation that it has been supposed to be a genuine Elizabethan production. His chief quality is one of ease and fluency, in combination with a certain cheerful briskness of thought and the amiable good sense that is the most striking element in his intellectual composition, it is to be found here and there in all he did. Unhappily for him and for us, it appears to have been as hard for him to correct as it was easy to write. Too often do his verses sound emptily to modern ears—

‘The art of English poetry, I find,  
At present, Jenkins, occupies your mind’—

too often do they set modern fingers itching to shape and improve them. It follows that he is seen to most advantage when, upon compulsion of his stanza, he is at his briefest and most careful. It is not without reason, therefore, that he is generally known but as the author of the sly and amiable quatrain of benediction alike on King and Pretender. That is the man’s highest point as an artist, it is at once his happiest and most complete utterance, and the body of his verse will be searched in vain for such another proof of merit and accomplishment.

W E HENLEY

## THE NIMMERS.

Two foot-companions once in deep discourse—

Tom, says the one, 'Let's go and *steal* a horse.'

'Steal! says the other in a huge surprise,

He that says I'm a thief, I say he lies.'

'Well, well, replies his friend, 'No such affront!

I did but ask ye. If you won't, you won't.

So they jogged on, till in another strain

The querist moved to honest Tom again:

'Suppose, says he, for supposition's sake

('Tis but a supposition that I make!)

Suppose that we should *filch* a horse, I say?

'Filch? filch? quoth Tom, demurring by the way,

'That's not so bad as downright theft, I own,

But yet—methinks,—'twere better let alone.

It soundeth something pitiful and low

Shall we go filch a horse you say? Why no!

I'll filch no filching—and I'll tell no lie:

Honesty's the best policy, say I!

Struck with such vast integrity quite dumb,

His comrade paused. At last, says he, 'Come, come,

Thou art an honest fellow I agree.

Honest and poor—Alas, that should not be!—

And dry into the bargain! And no drink!

Shall we go *nim* a horse, Tom? What dost think?

How clear are things when liquor's in the case!

Tom answers quick, with caustic grace,

Nim? yes, yes, yes! Let's nim, with all my heart.

I see no harm in nimming for my part.

Hard is the case, now I look sharp into't,

That honesty should trudge i' th dirt afoot!

So many empty horses round about,  
 That honesty should wear its bottoms out!  
 Besides, shall honesty be choked with thirst?  
 Were it my Lord Mayor's horse, I'd nim it first!  
 And, by the bye, my lad, no scrubby tit!  
 There is the best that ever wore a bit  
 Not far from hence'—'I take ye,' quoth his friend,  
 'Is not yon stable, Tom, our journey's end?'—  
 Good wits will jump, both meant the very steed,  
 The top o' the country both for shape and breed.  
 So to't they went, and with a halter round  
 His feathered neck they nimm'd him off the ground.

\* \* \* \* \*

'Twixt right and wrong how many gentle trimmers  
 Will neither steal nor filch, but will be plaguy Nimmers!

#### CARELESS CONTENT

I am content, I do not care,  
 Wag as it will the world for me!  
 When fuss and fret was all my fare  
 It got no ground that I could see,  
 So when away my caring went  
 I counted cost and was content.

With more of thanks and less of thought  
 I strive to make my matters meet,  
 To seek what ancient sages sought,  
 Physic and food in sour and sweet,  
 To take what passes in good part  
 And keep the hiccups from the heart.

With good and gently-humoured hearts  
 I choose to chat where'er I come,  
 Whate'er the subject be that starts,  
 But if I get among the glum  
 I hold my tongue to tell the troth,  
 And keep my breath to cool my broth.

For chance or change of peace or pain,  
For Fortune's favour or her frown,  
For lack or glut, for loss or gain,  
I never dodge nor up nor down,  
But swing what way the ship shall swim,  
Or tack about with equal trim.

I suit not where I shall not speed,  
Nor trace the turn of every tide.  
If simple sense will not succeed  
I make no bustling, but abide.  
For shining wealth or scaring woe  
I force no friend, I fear no foe.

Of ups and downs, of ins and outs,  
Of they're-P-th wrong and we're-P th right,  
I shun the rancours and the routs ;  
And, wishing well to every wight,  
Whatever turn the matter takes,  
I deem it all but ducks and drakes.

With whom I feast I do not fawn,  
Nor if the folks should flout me, faint.  
If wanted welcome be withdrawn  
I cook no kind of a complaint.  
With none disposed to disagree,  
I like them best who best like me.

Not that I rate myself the rule  
How all my betters should behave ;  
But fame shall find me no man's fool,  
Nor to a set of men a slave ;  
I love a friendship free and frank,  
But hate to hang upon a hank.

Fond of a true and trusty tie,  
I never loose where'er I link,  
Though if a business budges by  
I talk thereon just as I think,  
My word, my work, my heart, my hand,  
Still on a side together stand.

If names or notions make a noise,  
Whatever hap the question hath  
The point impartially I poise,  
And read and write, but without wrath,  
For, should I burn or break my brains,  
Pray, who will pay me for my pains?

I love my neighbour as myself—  
Myself like him too, by his leave!  
Nor to his pleasure, power or pelf  
Came I to crouch, as I conceive!  
Dame Nature doubtless has designed  
A man the monarch of his mind.

Now taste and try this temper, sirs,  
Mood it and brood it in your breast,  
Or, if ye ween for worldly stirrs  
That man does right to mar his rest,  
Let me be deft and debonair,  
I am content, I do not care!

#### ON THE ORIGIN OF EVIL.

Evil, if rightly understood,  
Is but the skeleton of good  
Divested of its flesh and blood.

While it remains, without divorce,  
Within its hidden secret source,  
It is the good's own strength and force.

As bone has the supporting share  
In human form divinely fair,  
Although an evil when laid bare ;

As light and air are, fed by fire,  
A shining good while all conspire,  
But, separate, dark raging ire ;

As hope and love arise from faith  
Which then admits no ill, nor hath,  
But, if alone, it would be wrath ;

Or any instance thought upon  
In which the evil can be none  
Till unity of good is gone —

So, by abuse of thought and skill,  
The greatest good, to wit, Free Will,  
Becomes the origin of ill.

Thus when rebellious angels fell,  
The very Heaven where good ones dwell  
Became the apostate spirits' hell ;

Seeking against eternal right  
A force without a love and light  
They found, and felt its evil might.

Thus Adam, biting at their bait  
Of good and evil, when he ate  
Died to his first thrice-happy state,

Fell to the evils of this ball  
Which, in harmonious union all,  
Were Paradise before his fall,

And, when the life of Christ in men  
Revives its faded image, then  
Will all be Paradise again.

## EPIGRAMS.

In truths that nobody can miss  
It is the *quid* that makes the *quis*,  
In such as lie more deeply hid  
It is the *quis* that makes the *quid*

God bless the King—I mean the faith's defender'  
God bless (no harm in blessing!) the Pretender!  
But who pretender is, or who is king—  
God bless us all!—that's quite another thing

## RICHARD GLOVER

[RICHARD GLOVER, the son of a London merchant, was born in 1712 in a house near Cannon Street, City. He was not at either university but through sympathy with the history of ancient Greece made himself a competent Greek scholar. He entered into business, and was much esteemed and trusted by the London merchants. In 1760 he was elected M.P. for Weymouth. His chief poems were, *Leonidas* 1737 (enlarged in 1770); *London or the Progress of Commerce* 1739; *Admiral Hooper's Ghost* in the same year; and *The Athenaid*, published posthumously in 1788. He died in 1785.]

Glover was a man of considerable powers, but he was stronger on the side of politics and practical life than in the field of literature. In his poems the rhetoric of party warfare is more conspicuous than the inspiration of genius. His best known poem, *Leonidas*, was based it is true on his reading of Herodotus and Plutarch; but in reality it is the utterance of one who wished to stir his fellow-citizens to an anti Walpole patriotic policy. So far as the form is concerned it may be called a blank verse echo of Pope's version of Homer, the influence of which may continually be traced; and under the inspiration of this model Glover expands the few simple chapters of his authority Herodotus into the dimensions of an epic by inventing various characters, love-affairs, and thrilling episodes.

Campbell remarks that the want of 'impetuosity of progress' is the chief fault in the poem. It does not seem clear that this censure is just. The action moves on swiftly enough, and is sufficiently varied by epoch making or decorative incidents. The personages introduced are not inactive, or long winded; they have only the damning fault of being dull. The reader does not much care what they do, nor what becomes of them. A sort of glossy rhetoric is the

general characteristic of the poem, which accordingly is not without striking passages, but the lack of human interest mars the total effect. Campbell was nearer the mark when, after observing that Glover does not make his pictures grotesque by introducing modern accessories and details, he added,—‘but his purity is cold, his heroes are like outlines of Grecian faces, with no distinct or minute physiognomy’ In agreement with this line of criticism, Southey describes *Leonidas* as ‘cold and bald, stately rather than strong in its best parts, and in general rather stiff than stately’ The terseness which Glover, writing about Spartans, affected, made him often pile a number of short abrupt sentences one upon the other, hence the stiffness and baldness of which Southey complains Thus we read in Book vii —

‘On living embers these are cast So wills  
Leonidas The phalanx then divides  
Four troops are form’d, by Dithyrambus led,  
By Alpheus, by Diomedon The last  
Himself conducts The word is given They seize  
The burning fuel.’

The conclusion, where Leonidas, after performing impossible feats of valour and slaughter, dies without a word, rather of exhaustion than of wounds, exhibits an uninteresting flatness, which Glover, who knew Virgil well, and must have noted how wonderfully effective are the last words of Dido, Turnus, Pallas, and Mezentius, ought sedulously to have avoided.

Of the *Athenaid*, a sequel to *Leonidas*, with its thirty books, it is enough to say that it is simply unreadable. It appears to be a florid reproduction, with new incidents and scenery, of the story of the Græco-Persian war, from Thermopylæ to Platæa.

The opposition to Sir Robert Walpole found in Glover an enthusiastic ally One of his chief objects in writing *London* is said to have been to exasperate the public mind against Spain, a power to which Walpole was held to have truckled. In the same year, after the news came of Vernon’s success at Porto Bello, Glover wrote the spirited ballad of *Hosier’s Ghost*, rather perhaps with the design of damaging Walpole than exalting Vernon. The political aim interests us no more, but the music and swing of the verse,—perhaps also the naval cast of the imagery and the diction,—will keep this ballad popular with Englishmen for many a year to come.

T ARNOLD.

## POLYDORUS AND MARON.

[From *Leonidas*, Book IX.]

I too, like them, from Lacedæmon spring,  
Like them instructed once to poise the spear  
To lift the ponderous shield. Ill destined wretch!  
Thy arm is grown enervate, and would sink  
Beneath a buckler's weight. Malignant fates,  
Who have compelled my free-born hand to change  
The warrior's arms for ignominious bonds;  
Would you compensate for my chains, my shame,  
My ten years anguish, and the fell despair  
Which on my youth have preyed—relenting once,  
Grant I may bear my buckler to the field,  
And, known a Spartan, seek the shades below!

'Why to be known a Spartan must thou seek  
The shades below? Impatient Maron spake.  
'Live, and be known a Spartan by thy deeds;  
Live, and enjoy thy dignity of birth  
Live, and perform the duties which become  
A citizen of Sparta. Still thy brow  
Frowns gloomy still unyielding. He who leads  
Our band, all fathers of a noble race,  
Will ne'er permit thy barren day to close  
Without an offspring to uphold the state.

'He will, replies the brother in a glow  
Prevailing o'er the paleness of his cheek,  
'He will permit me to complete by death  
The measure of my duty will permit  
Me to achieve a service, which no hand  
But mine can render to adorn his fall  
With double lustre, strike the barbarous foe  
With endless terror and avenge the shame  
Of an enslaved Laconian. Closing here  
His words mysterious, quick he turned away  
To find the tent of Agis. There his hand  
In grateful sorrow ministered her aid

While the humane, the hospitable care  
Of Agis, gently by her lover's corse  
On one sad bier the pallid beauties laid  
Of Ariena. He from bondage freed  
Four eastern captives, whom his generous arm  
That day had spared in battle, then began  
This solemn charge 'You, Persians, whom my sword  
Acquired in war, unransomed, shall depart  
To you I render freedom which you sought  
To wrest from me One recompense I ask,  
And one alone Transport to Asia's camp  
This bleeding princess Bid the Persian king  
Weep o'er this flow'r, untimely cut in bloom  
Then say, th' all-judging pow'rs have thus ordained.  
Thou, whose ambition o'er the groaning earth  
Leads desolation, o'er the nations spreads  
Calamity and tears, thou first shalt mourn,  
And through thy house destruction first shalt range'

#### BALLAD OF ADMIRAL HOSIER'S GHOST

As near Porto-Bello lying  
On the gently-swelling flood,  
At midnight with streamers flying  
Our triumphant navy rode,  
There while Vernon sat all-glorious  
From the Spaniards' late defeat,  
And his crews, with shouts victorious,  
Drank success to England's fleet,

On a sudden, shrilly sounding,  
Hideous yells and shrieks were heard;  
Then each heart with fear confounding,  
A sad troop of ghosts appeared,  
All in dreary hammocks shrouded,  
Which for winding sheets they wore,  
And with looks by sorrow clouded  
Frowning on that hostile shore.

On them gleamed the moon's wan lustre,  
When the shade of Hosier brave  
His pale hands was seen to muster  
Rising from their watery grave  
O'er the glimmering wave he bled him,  
Where the Burford reared her sail,  
With three thousand ghosts beside him,  
And in groans did Vernon hail.

'Heed, O heed, our fatal story  
I am Hosier's injured ghost,  
You, who now have purchased glory  
At this place where I was lost  
Though in Porto-Bello's ruin  
You now triumph free from fears,  
When you think on our undoing,  
You will mix your joy with tears.

See these mournful spectres sweeping  
Ghastly o'er this hated wave,  
Whose wan cheeks are stained with weeping;  
These were English captains brave  
Mark those numbers pale and horrid,  
Those were once my sailors bold,  
Lo, each hangs his drooping forehead,  
While his dismal tale is told.

I by twenty sail attended,  
Did this Spanish town affright;  
Nothing then its wealth defended  
But my orders not to fight  
O! that in this rolling ocean  
I had cast them with disdain,  
And obeyed my heart's warm motion,  
To have quelled the pride of Spain;

For resistance I could fear none,  
But with twenty ships had done  
What thou, brave and happy Vernon,  
Hast achieved with six alone.

Then the Bastimentos never  
Had our foul dishonour seen,  
Nor the sea the sad receiver  
Of this gallant train had been

'Thus, like thee, proud Spain dismaying,  
And her galleons leading home,  
Though condemned for disobeying,  
I had met a traitor's doom  
To have fallen, my country crying  
"He has played an English part,"  
Had been better far than dying  
Of a grieved and broken heart.

'Unrepining at thy glory,  
Thy successful arms we hail;  
But remember our sad story,  
And let Hosier's wrongs prevail.  
Sent in this foul chime to languish,  
Think what thousands fell in vain,  
Wasted with disease and anguish,  
Not in glorious battle slain.

'Hence with all my train attending,  
From their oozy tombs below,  
Through the hoary foam ascending,  
Here I feed my constant woe,  
Here the Bastimentos viewing,  
We recall our shameful doom,  
And, our plaintive cries renewing,  
Wander through the midnight gloom

'O'er these waves for ever mourning  
Shall we roam deprived of rest,  
If to Britain's shores returning  
You neglect my just request,  
After this proud foe subduing,  
When your patriot friends you see,  
Think on vengeance for my ruin,  
And for England shamed in me!'

## SAMUEL JOHNSON

[SAMUEL JOHNSON was born at Lichfield on the 18th of Sept. 1709. The first of his noteworthy poems, *London* was published in 1738, at a period of his life when he was in great poverty and for the copyright of the poem he only obtained ten guineas. It appeared on the same morning as Pope's *Satire*, 1738, and surpassed the latter in popularity. In 1747 he wrote his celebrated Prologue for the opening of Drury Lane Theatre. At this theatre was exhibited in 1749 his tragedy of *Irene*, which, though acted for thirteen nights, failed to secure the public favour. *The Vanity of Human Wishes* was published earlier in the same year with a view to excite an interest in the author of the play. These were his last important poetical works. He wrote however three Prologues: one to *Comus* in 1750, when that play was acted for the benefit of Milton's granddaughter; another to Goldsmith's *Good-natured Man* in 1769; and a third to the revived *Word to the Wise* in 1777. He died on the 13th of Dec. 1784.]

Johnson may be said to occupy the central place in that highly characteristic school of didactic poetry which was originated by Pope and completed by Goldsmith. The essence of Pope's didactic compositions is personal satire. It is true that he specially prides himself on being the champion of virtue and the great promoter of moral truth. But the virtue which he had invariably before his imagination was his own, and throughout his *Imitations of Horace* morality is always exalted in the person of the poet, and always seems to be endangered by the wicked virulence of his private enemies. In consequence of their intense personality Pope's didactic poems fall in point of poetical design. In the *Essay on Man* the subject matter is Bolingbroke's rather than Pope's, and the conduct of the argument is extraordinarily confused while in the *Moral Essays* and *Satires*, what really pleases is the beauty of detail, the terse epigrams, the brilliant images, and above all the matchless portraiture of particular characters. The great beauty of Goldsmith's poems, on the other

hand, lies in the justness of their design, the relation of the means to the end, and of the parts to the whole. He relies hardly at all on personal interest for his effects, but he is perhaps the most persuasive of all didactic poets, from the extraordinary art which he possesses of enlisting simple and universal feelings in behalf of the moral principle which he seeks to establish.

Johnson unites in his own style many of the opposite excellences exhibited by his predecessor and his friend. It was impossible that the bias of his strong character should be altogether concealed in his verse, and *London* in particular appears to have been largely inspired by personal motives like those which suggested to Pope his *Imitations of Horace*. But the different genius of the two poets is seen in the selection of their respective originals. Pope was struck by the many superficial points of resemblance between himself and the lively egotistical Horace, and seized eagerly on the opportunity of presenting his own virtues, friendships, and enmities to the public under a transparent veil of imitation. Johnson, on the contrary, who, as an unknown writer, could not hope to interest the public in his personal concerns, chose a general theme, and imitated the satirist whose denunciations of Roman vice offered, in many respects, an apt parallel to the manners of his own age. *London* is marked by genuine public spirit, at the same time we see quite as much of the man as of the moralist in the poet's characteristic allusions to the penalties of poverty, his antipathy to the Whigs, and his dislike of foreigners. The story that 'Thales' was meant for Savage, and that the occasion of the poem was the departure of the latter from London after his trial, is confuted by dates, but we may be sure that the poem gives us a real representation of Johnson's feelings as a struggling author and a political partisan.

*The Vanity of Human Wishes* marks a calmer and more prosperous epoch in the poet's life, and its philosophical generalising spirit is an anticipation of Goldsmith's *Traveller*. Johnson was now relieved from the immediate pressure of want, and in his second *Imitation* he takes a wider survey of mankind, he suppresses all personal satire, and fetches the illustrations of his argument from distant times. The style of this poem is also completely different from that of *London* in the latter he is ardent, animated, and colloquial, while in the *Vanity of Human Wishes* he speaks with the gravity of a moralist, making his periods swelling and sonorous, balancing his verses against each

other and equalling Pope himself in the condensation of his language. Nevertheless, the whole spirit of the composition, though professedly an imitation, is highly characteristic of the man we see in it the melancholy gloom that darkened all his view of human existence, while at the same time the noble lines of the conclusion recall the language of those touching fragments of prayer which Boswell discovered among his papers and has preserved in his *Life*.

His Prologues are of the highest excellence. Indeed it may be confidently affirmed that he is the best writer of prologues in the language. No man was ever so well qualified to strike that just mean between respectfulness and authority which such addresses to the public require. His sound critical power and elevated feeling are well exemplified in the *Prologue spoken at the opening of Drury Lane Theatre* and there is true greatness of spirit in his Prologue to *Comus* in which he claims the liberality of the audience for Milton's granddaughter as a tardy redress for the injustice shown by the nation to the genius of the poet himself. His admirable independence of character is perhaps even better seen in the Prologue to *A Word to the Wise* a play which at its first exhibition was damned in consequence of political prejudices against the author but was revived after his death. Nothing can be better than the dignity with which Johnson, in this address, while recognising the judicial authority of the audience, indirectly reproves them for their previous disregard of the laws of humanity by which all their verdicts ought to be determined.

W J COURTHOPE

## THALFS' REASONS FOR LEAVING LONDON

[From *London*]

A transient calm the happy scenes bestow  
 And for a moment lull the sense of woe.  
 At length awaking, with contemptuous frown  
 Indignant Thales eyes the neighb'ring town

Since worth, he cries, in these degenerate days  
 Wants even the cheap reward of empty praise,  
 In those cursed walls, devote to vice and gain,  
 Since unrewarded science toils in vain,  
 Since hope but soothes to double my distress,  
 And every moment leaves my little less,  
 While yet my steady steps no staff sustains,  
 And life still vigorous revels in my veins,  
 Grant me, kind Heaven, to find some happier place,  
 Where honesty and sense are no disgrace,  
 Some pleasing bank where verdant osiers play,  
 Some peaceful vale with Nature's paintings gay,  
 Where once the harass'd Briton found repose,  
 And safe in poverty defied his foes,  
 Some secret cell, ye powers indulgent give,  
 Let — live here, for — has learned to live.  
 Here let those reign, whom pensions can incite  
 To vote a patriot black, a courtier white,  
 Explain their country's dear-bought rights away  
 And plead for pirates in the face of day,  
 With slavish tenets taint our poisoned youth  
 And lend a lie the confidence of truth

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*

Ah! what avails it that, from slavery far,  
 I drew the breath of life in English air,  
 Was early taught a Briton's right to prize,  
 And hush the tale of Henry's victories,  
 If the gulled conqueror receives the chain,  
 And flattery prevails when arms are vain?

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*

By numbers here from shame or censure free,  
All crimes are safe but hated poverty  
This, only this, the rigid law pursues,  
This, only this, provokes the snarling Muse.  
The sober trader at a tatter'd cloak  
Wakes from his dream and labours for a joke  
With brisker air the silken courtiers gaze  
And turn the varied taunt a thousand ways.

Of all the griefs that harass the distressed,  
Sure the most bitter is a scornful jest;  
Fate never wounds more deep the generous heart,  
Than when a blockhead's insult points the dart.

Has Heaven reserv'd in pity to the poor  
No pathless waste or undiscovered shore?  
No secret island in the boundless main?  
No peaceful desert yet unclaimed by Spain?  
Quick let us rise, the happy seats explore  
And bear oppression's insolence no more.  
This mournful truth is everywhere confessed,  
Slow rises worth by poverty depressed  
But here more slow where all are slaves to gold,  
Where looks are merchandise and smiles are sold,  
Where, won by bribes, by flatteries implored,  
The groom retails the favours of his lord.

#### THE RISE AND FALL OF WOLSEY

[From *The Vanity of Human Wishes*.]

In full blown dignity see Wolsey stand,  
Law in his voice, and fortune in his hand  
To him the church, the realm, their powers consign,  
Through him the rays of regal bounty shine,  
Turned by his nod the stream of honour flows,  
His smile alone security bestows  
Still to new heights his restless wishes tower  
Claim leads to claim and power advances power;  
Till conquest unresisted ceased to please,  
And rights submitted left him none to seize;

At length his sovereign frowns—the train of state  
Mark the keen glance, and watch the sign to hate.  
Where'er he turns, he meets a stranger's eye,  
His suppliants scorn him, and his followers fly,  
Now drops at once the pride of awful state,  
The golden canopy, the glittering plate,  
The regal palace, the luxurious board,  
The liveried army, and the menial lord.  
With age, with cares, with maladies oppress'd,  
He seeks the refuge of monastic rest.

Grief aids disease, remembered folly stings,  
And his last sighs reproach the faith of kings  
Speak thou whose thoughts at humble peace repine,  
Shall Wolsey's wealth with Wolsey's end be thine?  
Or liv'st thou now, with safer pride content,  
The wisest Justice on the banks of Trent?  
For, why did Wolsey, near the steeps of fate,  
On weak foundations raise the enormous weight?  
Why but to sink beneath misfortune's blow,  
With louder ruin to the gulfs below?

### THE TRUE OBJECTS OF DESIRE.

[From *The Vanity of Human Wishes*]

Where then shall Hope and Fear their objects find?  
Must dull suspense corrupt the stagnant mind?  
Must helpless man, in ignorance sedate,  
Roll darkling down the torrent of his fate?  
Must no dislike, alarm, no wishes rise,  
No cries invoke the mercies of the skies?  
Inquirer, cease, petitions yet remain  
Which Heaven may hear, nor deem religion vain  
Still raise for good the supplicating voice,  
But leave to Heaven the measure and the choice.  
Safe in his power whose eyes discern afar  
The secret ambush of a specious prayer,

Implore his aid, in his decisions rest,  
Secure whate'er he gives, he gives the best.  
Yet, when the sense of sacred presence fires,  
And strong devotion to the skies aspires  
Pour forth thy fervours for a healthful mind,  
Obedient passions, and a will resigned  
For love, which scarce collective man can fill;  
For patience, sovereign o'er transmuted ill  
For faith, that, panting for a happier seat,  
Counts death kind nature's signal of retreat  
These goods for man the laws of Heaven ordain,  
These goods He grants who grants the power to gain;  
With these celestial Wisdom calms the mind,  
And makes the happiness she does not find.

PROLOGUE SPOKEN AT THE OPENING OF THE  
DRURY LANE THEATRE 1747

When Learning's triumph o'er her barbarous foes  
First reared the stage, immortal Shakespeare rose  
Each change of many-colour'd life he drew  
Exhausted worlds and then imagined new  
Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign,  
And panting Time toiled after him in vain  
His powerful strokes presiding Truth impressed  
And unresisted Passion stormed the breast.

Then Jonson came, instructed from the school,  
To please in method and invent by rule  
His studious patience and laborious art,  
By regular approach assailed the heart  
Cold approbation gave the lingering bays,  
For those who durst not censure scarce could praise.  
A mortal born, he met the general doom,  
But left, like Egypt's kings, a lasting tomb.

The wits of Charles found easier ways to fame,  
Nor wished for Jonson's art or Shakespeare's flame

Themselves they studied, as they felt they writ,  
Intrigue was plot, obscenity was wit  
Vice always found a sympathetic friend;  
They pleased their age and did not aim to mend.  
Yet bards like these aspired to lasting praise,  
And proudly hoped to pimp in future days  
Their cause was general, their supports were strong,  
Their slaves were willing and their reign was long,  
Till Shame regained the post that Sense betrayed,  
And Virtue called Oblivion to her aid.

Then crushed by rules, and weakened as refined,  
For years the power of Tragedy declined  
From bard to bard the frigid caution crept,  
Till Declamation roared, whilst Passion slept.  
Yet still did Virtue deign the stage to tread,  
Philosophy remained though Nature fled  
But forced at length her ancient reign to quit,  
She saw great Faustus lay the ghost of Wit,  
Exulting Folly hailed the joyful day,  
And Pantomime and Song confirmed her sway

But who the coming changes can presage,  
And mark the future periods of the Stage?  
Perhaps if skill could distant times explore,  
New Behns, new Dufseys yet remain in store,  
Perhaps, where Lear has raved, and Hamlet died,  
On flying cars new sorcerers may ride  
Perhaps (for who can guess th' effects of chance?)  
Here Hunt may box, or Mahomet may dance.

Hard is his lot that, here by Fortune plac'd,  
Must watch the wild vicissitudes of taste,  
With ev'ry meteor of caprice must play,  
And chase the new-blown bubbles of the day  
Ah! let not Censure term our fate our choice,  
The stage but echoes back the public voice,  
The drama's laws, the drama's patrons give,  
For we that live to please, must please to live.

Then prompt no more the follies you decry,  
As tyrants doom their tools of guilt to die,

'Tis yours, this night, to bid the reign commence  
Of rescued Nature and reviving Sense ;  
To chase the charms of sound, the pomp of show,  
For useful mirth and salutary woe ;  
Bid scenic Virtue form the rising age,  
And Truth diffuse her radiance from the stage.

## PROLOGUE TO THE COMEDY OF A WORD TO THE WISE.

This night presents a play which public rage,  
Or right, or wrong once hooted from the stage,  
From zeal or malice now no more we dread,  
For English vengeance wars not with the dead.  
A generous foe regards with pitying eye  
The man whom fate has laid where all must lie.

To wit reviving from its author's dust  
Be kind, ye judges, or at least be just.  
For no renewed hostilities invade  
Th' oblivious grave's inviolable shade.  
Let one great payment every claim appease,  
And him, who cannot hurt, allow to please,  
To please by scenes unconscious of offence,  
By harmless merriment, or useful sense,  
Where aught of bright or fair the piece displays,  
Approve it only—'tis too late to praise.  
If want of skill or want of care appear,  
Forbear to hiss—the poet cannot hear.  
By all like him must praise and blame be found  
At best a fleeting gleam, or empty sound.  
Yet then shall calm reflection bless the night,  
When liberal pity dignified delight  
When pleasure fir'd her torch at virtue's flame,  
And mirth was bounty with an humbler name.

# JOHN AND CHARLES WESLEY

[JOHN WESLEY, founder of 'the people called Methodists,' was the second son of Samuel Wesley, Rector of Epworth. He was born June 17, 1703. Educated at the Charterhouse and Oxford, he was elected Fellow of Lincoln College in 1726, and there with some brief intervals remained till 1735, when having been ordained by Potter, then Bishop of Oxford, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, he laid the first foundations of the society which, from the rigid and almost ascetic rules adopted by its members, was called 'Methodists']

In 1735 he went to Georgia, at the inducement of General Oglethorpe, governor of that colony, to preach to the Indians. This mission, for personal reasons, was a comparative failure. He returned to England in 1738, and there found that his former friend and disciple, George Whitefield, had embarked on the course of itinerant preaching, in which John Wesley, though with considerable difference of character and opinions, joined him—and this from henceforth became the purpose of his life. A career of incessant activity, in which preaching, writing, and organising played almost equal parts, occupied the remainder of his long career, which closed on March 2, 1791. He had, as Matthew Arnold expresses it, 'a genius for godliness,' and he united with it a breadth of sympathy and a soundness of judgment which, although occasionally betrayed into eccentricity, gave him a conspicuous place amongst the teachers of the eighteenth century. His life is best told, in a literary point of view, by Southey, and with the utmost detail of admiring yet truthful partisanship, by Dr Tyerman.

CHARLES WESLEY, John's younger brother, was born Oct. 18, 1708. He was educated at Westminster School, and Christ Church, Oxford, and shared his brother's career in Oxford and in Georgia. He was more of a scholar and poet than of a preacher, and his connexion with the Church of England was exposed to a less severe strain than that of John. He died in 1788.]

It was a fine conception which prompted John Wesley to the arduous task of creating for his followers not merely an ecclesiastical

society a code of laws, and a rule of life, but also a poetical literature which should fulfil their religious aspirations. The thought was no doubt inspired by two motives,—one expressed tersely by a famous Scottish statesman, the other by himself. Fletcher of Saltoun is reported to have said, 'Give others the making of a nation's laws, if only you give to me the making of a nation's ballads'; and John Wesley from another point of view added to this sense of the importance of popular poetry the feeling that it ought to be rescued from the exclusive possession of the world,—'Why should the devil have all the best tunes?

The poetical works of John and Charles Wesley extend through ten volumes, edited lately with scrupulous care by Dr G. Osborn. Such a demand as the Wesleys thus imposed on their own powers was too extensive even for a great poet to have met; but in this case the difficulty was aggravated partly by the nature of the subject, partly by their own deficiencies. The question why poetry as applied to sacred subjects, has not had a greater success, has been often debated. A distinguished critic of our times, in his professorial chair is reported one day to have held out in one hand 'The Golden Treasury of English Lyrics collected by Francis Palgrave, and in the other 'The Book of Praise, collected from all English hymnody by Lord Selborne, and to have asked, 'Why is it that the Golden Treasury contains almost nothing that is bad, and why is it that the Book of Praise contains almost nothing that is good? The complaint does not apply exclusively to the hymns of Protestant Churches. Dean Milman, in his *Latin Christianity* has observed that the fame of the Latin hymns of the Mediæval Church rests chiefly on six or seven well known examples. Take away the Dies Iræ, the Veni Sanctus Spiritus, the Stabat Mater Dolorosa, the Pange Lingua Gloriosa, the Lauda Sion Salvatorem,—and there remains very little that from a literary point of view deserves any attention. In the numerous hymns which have lately been translated into English from the Latin in Lord Bute's edition of the Roman Breviary it is observable that whilst in those which are rendered into English by Cardinal Newman there is a distinct poetical glow and artistic finish, all the rest are couched in the uniform pedestrian style which is unfortunately familiar to English Churchmen in the vast mass of the verses contained in 'Hymns Ancient and Modern. It is the English poet of the nineteenth century not the Latin hymnodists of the

fourteenth or fifteenth that have furnished whatever there is of poetical in the collection. Three reasons may be given for this comparative failure, inherent in the nature of the subject.

The first is, that the moment poetry is made a vehicle of theological argument it becomes essentially prosaic, as much, or almost as much, as if it were employed for arguments on political or philosophical problems. This accounts for the repulsive aspect worn by that vast number of the Wesleyan hymns which were written to set forth their peculiar and complex system of predestination, assurance, and substitution.

The second reason is, that the very greatness of the words which either from biblical or ecclesiastical usage have been consecrated to the sublime thoughts of religion, misleads the writer into the belief that they are of themselves sufficient to carry on the poetic afflatus. The consequence has been that, whether in Latin or in English, the writers of hymns have been tempted to ring the changes on sacred phrases without imparting to them the touch of their own native sentiment or genius, and consequently that a large majority of hymns exemplify almost as much as the watch-words of political or ecclesiastical party, although in a loftier region, the force of the expression of St Paul, 'a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.'

The third cause is the temptation which biblical metaphors have afforded of pursuing into detail, and especially into anatomical detail, expressions derived from the physical structure of the human frame. Of all the forms of devotion which in the Roman Catholic Church have taken possession of devout minds, the most unattractive, the most prosaic, because the most surgical, is the devotion which fastens itself on pictures and representations of the Sacred Heart. Such is the temptation which the Wesleyan hymns have too much followed in their luxuriance of phraseology, like 'the dropping of the warm blood,' or like these lines from one of the poems of John Wesley

'I felt my heart, and found a chillness cool  
Its purple channels in my frozen side,  
The spring was now become a standing pool,  
Deprived of motion, and its active tide'

These difficulties, as we have said, are almost inherent in the nature of the subject, but there are others which arise from the

deficiencies of the author. The general interest in theology and the yet more general interest in religious feeling have enlisted in the service of theology both in prose and poetry a larger number of inferior writers than will be found either in philosophy or history or science. It is not every one who believes himself equal to a treatise on the stars, or the history of the English nation but there are very few who do not think themselves equal to treating the truths which concern us all so deeply as those which are involved whether in the essence or in the circumstantialia of religion. Accordingly, whilst the Mediaeval Church produced only one or possibly two great poets, there was no restraint on the number of commonplace minds who thought themselves competent to attempt those monastic doggerel rhymes which fill the larger part of the mediaeval hymnology. So also has it been in the Protestant Churches. Men who had hardly a particle of poetic fire in their souls, have not scrupled to produce any number of hymns or psalms on these permitted themes. Amongst such John Wesley is conspicuous. Of all the characteristics of that wonderful mind, none is more remarkable than his downright, plain-spoken, matter-of-fact mode of facing all the great problems which presented themselves to him. For lucidity of expression he almost rivals Paley for energy he mounts to the level of Warburton or Horsley. But in the prosaic century with which his life was coextensive he was almost the least qualified to produce a substantial addition to its poetry. In the ten volumes of which we have spoken it is sufficient to take at random some few of the passages in which he has endeavoured to clothe his sentiments in verse, in order to appreciate on how low a step he stood in the school of the Muses.

The smoke of the infernal cave,  
Which half the Christian world o'erspread,  
Disperse, Thou heavenly Light, and save  
The souls by that impostor led,  
That Arab-thief, as Satan bold,  
Who quite destroy'd Thine Asian fold,

With pious Jones and Royal Charles may I  
A martyr for the Church of England die!

At this most alarming crisis,  
Shall we not from sin awake,  
While the great Jehovah rises,  
Terribly the earth to shake?

Nevertheless there are two sources of inspiration from which hymn-writers in general and John Wesley in particular have derived a fire which makes it impossible to overlook the claims of the Wesleyan hymnology to be ranked as part of our national literature. First, however prosaic might be the soul of John Wesley himself, he had sufficient appreciation of the grandeur of the gift in others to appropriate it in some degree for his purposes. Such are some beautiful passages adopted or adapted from Gambold the Moravian and from George Herbert. But yet more, Charles Wesley supplied in a large degree the deficiencies of his brother John. He doubtless also was led away by those temptations of hymn-writers to which we have before referred. What John Wesley said of Charles Wesley's Hymns on the Nativity might well have been extended to many dozens, 'Omit one or two of them and I will thank you. They are namby-pambical.' But Charles nevertheless had within him a poetic fervour, perhaps a scholar-like polish, which his brother wanted. These gifts showed themselves in the closer tenacity with which he clung to the Church of his fathers, and also gave to his hymns a literary character which redeems many of them from the pedestrian and argumentative style which disfigures so large a part of his own and his brother's poems. Secondly, there is a redeeming quality in the subjects themselves round which hymns have clustered, although it is true that polemics and over-strained metaphors and sounding words are dangerous pitfalls, yet when a genuine religious soul strikes on one of the greater themes of religion, either touching the simpler emotions of the human heart or the more unquestionable doctrines of Christianity, is struck a spark which not unfrequently rises into true and lasting poetry. Such in the Roman Church were those few hymns to which we have called attention, and such in the Wesleyan hymns are those which we shall select in the following extracts.

Of these the two most important are two of Charles Wesley's hymns, the first on Wrestling Jacob, the second on Catholic Love. The hymn on Wrestling Jacob is not only a hymn, but a philosophical poem, disfigured indeed in parts by the anatomical allusions to the shrunk sinew, but filled on the whole with a depth and pathos which might well excite Watts to say that 'it was worth all the verses he himself had written,' and induce Montgomery to compare it to the action of a lyrical drama.

Of the Hymn on Catholic Love it is a curious and significant

fact that it is not contained in any ordinary hymn book used either by the Wesleyan community or by the English Church. It is not to be found in Lord Selborne's *Book of Praise*. It was first published at the end of John Wesley's sermon on the Catholic Spirit on 2 Kings x. 15, in 1755. Nevertheless it is not contained in the published edition of the three volumes where that sermon is printed 'with the last corrections of the author' (1849). It is only to be found, as far as we are aware, in the *Century of Methodism* p. 175 (1839), and in vol. vi. 71 of *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*. Within the last year it has been republished from the last entry of the journal of Catherine Stanley widow of Bishop Stanley (*Memoirs of Edward and Catherine Stanley*).

A. P. STANLEY

## CHARLES WESLEY.

## CHRISTMAS HYMN.

Hark ! how all the welkin rings  
Glory to the King of kings !<sup>1</sup>  
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled !  
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,  
Join the triumph of the skies ,  
Universal nature say,  
Christ the Lord is born to-day !  
  
Christ, by highest Heaven adored ;  
Christ, the Everlasting Lord ,  
Late in time behold Him come,  
Offspring of a Virgin's womb  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see ;  
Hail, th' Incarnate Deity,  
Pleased as man with men to appear,  
Jesus, our Immanuel here !  
  
Hail ! the heavenly Prince of Peace !  
Hail ! the Sun of Righteousness !  
Light and life to all He brings,  
Risen with healing in His wings.  
Mild He lays His glory by,  
Born that man no more may die,  
Born to raise the sons of earth,  
Born to give them second birth.  
  
Come, Desire of nations, come,  
Fix in us Thy humble home !  
Rise, the Woman's conquering Seed,  
Bruise in us the Serpent's head !

<sup>1</sup> These lines are now, with great advantage, always altered to  
'Hark, the herald angels sing  
Glory to the new-born King'

Now display Thy saving power,  
Ruined nature now restore,  
Now in mystic union join  
Thine to ours, and ours to Thine!

Adam's likeness, Lord efface;  
Stamp Thy image in its place;  
Second Adam from above,  
Reinstate us in Thy love!  
Let us Thee, though lost, regain,  
Thee, the Life, the Heavenly Man  
O! to all Thyself impart,  
Formed in each believing heart!

EASTER HYMN.

Christ the Lord is risen to-day  
Sons of men and angels say  
Raise your joys and triumphs high,  
Sing, ye heavens, and earth reply

Love's redeeming work is done,  
Fought the fight, the battle won:  
Lo! our Sun's eclipse is o'er;  
Lo! He sets in blood no more.

Vain the stone, the watch, the seal;  
Christ hath burst the gates of hell!  
Death in vain forbids His rise;  
Christ hath opened Paradise!

Lives again our glorious King:  
Where, O Death, is now thy sting?  
Once He died, our souls to save  
Where thy victory O Grave?

Soar we now where Christ has led,  
Following our exalted Head;  
Made like Him, like Him we rise;  
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies.

What though once we perished all,  
Partners in our parents' fall?  
Second life we all receive,  
In our Heavenly Adam live.

Risen with Him, we upward move;  
Still we seek the things above,  
Still pursue, and kiss the Son  
Seated on His Father's Throne.

Scarce on earth a thought bestow,  
Dead to all we leave below,  
Heav'n our aim, and loved abode,  
Hid our life with Christ in God.

Hid, till Christ our Life appear  
Glorious in His members here,  
Join'd to Him, we then shall shine,  
All immortal, all divine.

Hail the Lord of Earth and Heaven!  
Praise to Thee by both be given!  
Thee we greet triumphant now!  
Hail, the Resurrection Thou!

King of glory, Soul of bliss!  
Everlasting life is this,  
Thee to know, Thy power to prove,  
Thus to sing, and thus to love!

#### CHRIST, THE REFUGE OF THE SOUL

Jesu, lover of my soul,  
Let me to Thy bosom fly,  
While the nearer waters roll,  
While the tempest still is high!  
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,  
Till the storm of life is past,  
Safe into the haven guide,  
O receive my soul at last!

Other refuge have I none  
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee ;  
Leave, ah ! leave me not alone,  
Still support and comfort me !  
All my trust on Thee is stay'd,  
All my help from Thee I bring  
Cover my defenceless head  
With the shadow of Thy wing !

Wilt Thou not regard my call ?  
Wilt Thou not accept my prayer ?  
Lo ! I sink, I faint, I fall !  
Lo ! on Thee I cast my care !  
Reach me out Thy gracious hand !  
While I of Thy strength receive,  
Hoping against hope I stand,  
Dying, and behold I live !

Thou, O Christ, art all I want ;  
More than all in Thee I find :  
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,  
Heal the sick, and lead the blind !  
Just and holy is Thy Name  
I am all unrighteousness ;  
False and full of sin I am,  
Thou art full of truth and grace.

Plenteous grace with Thee is found,  
Grace to cover all my sin ;  
Let the healing streams abound ;  
Make and keep me pure within !  
Thou of Life the Fountain art,  
Freely let me take of Thee ;  
Spring Thou up within my heart !  
Rise to all eternity !

## CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE.

Lamb of God, I look to Thee,  
Thou shalt my example be,  
Thou art gentle, meek, and mild;  
Thou wast once a little child.

Fain I would be as Thou art;  
Give me Thy obedient heart!  
Thou art pitiful and kind,  
Let me have Thy loving mind!

Meek and lowly may I be;  
Thou art all humility!  
Let me to my betters bow,  
Subject to Thy parents Thou.

Let me above all fulfil  
God my heavenly Father's will;  
Never His good Spirit grieve,  
Only to His glory live!

Thou didst live to God alone,  
Thou didst never seek Thine own,  
Thou Thyself didst never please,  
God was all Thy happiness.

Loving Jesu, gentle Lamb,  
In Thy gracious hands I am;  
Make me, Saviour, what Thou art!  
Live Thyself within my heart!

I shall then shew forth Thy praise;  
Serve Thee all my happy days,  
Then the world shall always see  
Christ, the Holy Child, in me.

## WRESTLING JACOB.

Come, O thou Traveller unknown,  
Whom still I hold, but cannot see  
My company before is gone,  
And I am left alone with Thee  
With Thee all night I mean to stay  
And wrestle till the break of day

I need not tell Thee who I am,  
My misery or sin declare  
Thyself hast called me by my name  
Look on Thy hands, and read it there!  
But Who, I ask Thee, Who art Thou?  
Tell me Thy Name, and tell me now

In vain Thou strugglest to get free  
I never will unloose my hold  
Art Thou the Man that died for me?  
The secret of Thy love unfold  
Wrestling, I will not let Thee go,  
Till I Thy Name, Thy Nature know

Wilt Thou not yet to me reveal  
Thy new unutterable Name?  
Tell me, I still beseech Thee, tell:  
To know it now resolved I am:  
Wrestling, I will not let Thee go,  
Till I Thy Name, Thy Nature know

'Tis all in vain to hold Thy tongue,  
Or touch the hollow of my thigh  
Though every sinew be unstrung,  
Out of my arms Thou shalt not fly:  
Wrestling, I will not let Thee go,  
Till I Thy Name, Thy Nature know

What though my shrinking flesh complain,  
And murmur to contend so long?  
I rise superior to my pain,  
When I am weak, then I am strong  
And when my all of strength shall fail,  
I shall with the God-Man prevail.

My strength is gone, my nature dies,  
I sink beneath Thy weighty hand,  
Faint to revive, and fall to rise,  
I fall, and yet by faith I stand  
I stand, and will not let Thee go,  
Till I Thy Name, Thy Nature know.

Yield to me now, for I am weak,  
But confident in self-despair,  
Speak to my heart, in blessings speak,  
Be conquer'd by my instant prayer!  
Speak, or Thou never hence shalt move,  
And tell me, if Thy Name is Love?

'Tis Love! 'tis Love! Thou diedst for me!  
I hear Thy whisper in my heart!  
The morning breaks, the shadows flee,  
Pure universal Love Thou art!  
To me, to all, Thy bowels move,  
Thy Nature, and Thy Name, is Love!

My prayer hath power with God, the grace  
Unspeakable I now receive,  
Through faith I see Thee face to face,  
I see Thee face to face, and live  
In vain I have not wept and strove,  
Thy Nature, and Thy Name, is Love.

I know Thee, Saviour, Who Thou art,  
Jesus, the feeble sinner's Friend!  
Nor wilt Thou with the night depart,  
But stay, and love me to the end!

JOHN AND CHARLES WESLEY

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Thy mercies never shall remove,  
Thy Nature, and Thy Name, is Love!

The Sun of Righteousness on me  
Hath rose, with healing in His wings;  
Withered my nature's strength, from Thee  
My soul its life and succour brings  
My help is all laid up above;  
Thy Nature, and Thy Name, is Love.

Contented now upon my thigh  
I halt, till life's short journey end;  
All helplessness, all weakness, I  
On Thee alone for strength depend;  
Nor have I power from Thee to move;  
Thy Nature, and Thy Name, is Love.

Lame as I am, I take the prey  
Hell, earth, and sin, with ease o'ercome;  
I leap for joy pursue my way  
And as a bounding hart fly home!  
Through all eternity to prove,  
Thy Nature and Thy Name is Love!

CATHOLIC LOVE.

Weary of all this wordy strife,  
These notions, forms, and modes, and names,  
To Thee, the Way the Truth, the Life,  
Whose love my simple heart inflames,  
Divinely taught, at last I fly  
With Thee, and Thine to live, and die.

Forth from the midst of Babel brought,  
Parties and sects I cast behind;  
Enlarged my heart, and free my thought,  
Where'er the latent truth I find,  
The latent truth with joy to own,  
And bow to Jesu's name alone.

Redeem'd by Thine almighty grace,  
I taste my glorious liberty,  
With open arms the world embrace,  
But cleave to those who cleave to Thee,  
But only in Thy saints delight,  
Who walk with God in purest white.

One with the little flock I rest,  
The members sound who hold the Head,  
The chosen few, with pardon blest,  
And by the anointing Spirit led  
Into the mind that was in Thee,  
Into the depths of Deity

My brethren, friends, and kinsmen these,  
Who do my heavenly Father's will,  
Who aim at perfect holiness,  
And all Thy counsels to fulfil,  
Athirst to be whate'er Thou art,  
And love their God with all their heart.

For these, howe'er in flesh disjoin'd,  
Where'er dispersed o'er earth abroad,  
Unfeigned unbounded love I find,  
And constant as the life of God,  
Fountain of life, from thence it sprung,  
As pure, as even, and as strong

Joined to the hidden church unknown  
In this sure bond of perfectness,  
Obscurely safe, I dwell alone,  
And glory in the uniting grace.  
To me, to each believer given,  
To all thy saints in earth and heaven

## JOHN WESLEY

## AN HYMN FOR SERIOUSNESS

Thou God of glorious majesty  
To Thee against myself, to Thee  
A worm of earth I cry  
An half-awakened child of man,  
An heir of endless bliss or pain,  
A sinner born to die.

Lo! on a narrow neck of land,  
'Twixt two unbounded seas I stand  
Secure, insensible<sup>1</sup>  
A point of life, a moment's space  
Removes me to that heavenly place,  
Or shuts me up in hell.

O God, mine inmost soul convert,  
And deeply on my thoughtful heart  
Eternal things impress,  
Give me to feel their solemn weight,  
And tremble on the brink of fate,  
And wake to righteousness.

Before me place in dread array  
The pomp of that tremendous day  
When Thou with clouds shalt come  
To judge the nations at Thy bar  
And tell me, Lord, shall I be there  
To meet a joyful doom?

<sup>1</sup> Said to have been suggested by a rocky isthmus at the Land's End seawall.

Be this my one great business here,  
With serious industry, and fear,  
My future bliss to insure,  
Thine utmost counsel to fulfil,  
And suffer all Thy righteous will,  
And to the end endure.

Then, Saviour, then my soul receive,  
Transported from the vale, to live  
And reign with Thee above,  
Where faith is sweetly lost in sight,  
And hope in full supreme delight,  
And everlasting love.

## WILLIAM SHENSTONE

[SHENSTONE was born at the Lexdown, near Hales Owen in 1714: he died at the same place in 1763. In 1737 while still at Pembroke College, Oxford, he published some miscellaneous poems anonymously. *The Judgment of Hercules* appeared in 1741. *The Schoolmistress* next year. His works, prose and verse, were published in 1764, the year after his death.]

Shenstone is our principal master of what may perhaps be called the artificial natural style in poetry: and the somewhat lasting hold which some at least of his poems have taken on the popular ear is the best testimony that can be produced to his merit. It is very hard to shape any critical canons likely to pass muster nowadays, and yet capable of saving the bulk of his verse. But the first and second of his *Pastoral Ballads* always fix themselves in the memory of those who, possessing that faculty are set in childhood to the not very grateful task of learning them; and on re-reading them years after they do not wholly lose their charm, though the reader may be tempted rather to smile than to sympathise. *The Schoolmistress*, especially the charming passage here, as usually given, has something of the same grace, so has the *Dying Kid*; while the poem on St. Valentine's Day would perhaps be the best of Shenstone's works but for some inexcusable negligences of expression which ten minutes study would have corrected. It is difficult to believe that Shenstone ever gave much study to his work, or that he possessed any critical faculty. His elegies, though not always devoid of music, are but dreary stuff, and his more ambitious poems still drearier. His attempts at the style of Prior and Gay are for the most part valueless. Yet when all this is discarded, My banks they are furnished with bees: and a few other such things, obstinately recur to the memory and assert that their author after all was a poet. In the mixture of grace and pathos with a certain triviality with much that is artificial, and with not a little that is downright foolish, Shenstone comes nearer to Goldsmith than to any other English author. His tenderness,

his knowledge of human nature, and his literary power, are of course far inferior to Goldsmith's, yet if inferior in degree he is nevertheless not wholly dissimilar in kind. The really affecting elegy on 'Jessy' is an instance of the genuine feeling which, in an age when such feeling was not common, he possessed, nor are other instances of the same kind hard to be found in him.

As concerns the formal part of poetry, his management of the anapaestic trimeter is unquestionably his chief merit. In the Spenserian stanza he is commendable, and dates fortunately prevent the charge that if *The Castle of Indolence* had not been written neither would *The Schoolmistress*. His anapaests are much more original. The metre is so incurably associated with sing-song and doggrel, that poems written in it are exposed to a heavy disadvantage, yet in the first two pastoral ballads at any rate this disadvantage is not much felt. Shenstone taught the metre to a greater poet than himself, Cowper, and these two between them have written almost everything that is worth reading in it, if we put avowed parody and burlesque out of the question. Perhaps the history of his gardening at the Leasowes has mixed itself up too thoroughly with Shenstone's work, and has soiled his harmless pastorals with memories of the tumble-down huts, the broken benches, the mouldy statues, and all the rest of the draggled finery which in our climate is associated more or less with this style of decoration and of which almost everybody has seen examples. But it really seems that he had, as his well-meaning French panegyrist asserted, 'a mind natural' even though the 'Arcadian greens rural' which he 'laid' must have smacked far less of nature than of art. 'The crook and the pipe and the kid,' of which Johnson speaks so contemptuously, are somehow or other less distasteful in Shenstone than in any other poet. For in the first place one cannot help remembering that the man did, as few men have done, try to turn his life in accordance with his verse, and Worcestershire (nominally Shropshire) into the likeness of the counterfeit Arcadia. Secondly there is an inoffensiveness about him which conciliates and disarms. He was not a great poet, perhaps indeed he was a very small one, but he was a poet somehow, and he wore his rue with a sufficient difference from other poets to deserve that his name should live long in the history of English verse.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

## SUFFERING AND SYMPATHY

[From *The Schoolmistress*.]

O ruthless scene! when from a nook obscure  
His little sister doth his peril see  
All playful as she sate, she grows demure;  
She finds full soon her wonted spirits flee,  
She meditates a prayer to set him free  
Nor gentle pardon could this dame deny  
(If gentle pardon could with dames agree)  
To her sad grief that swells in either eye  
And wrings her so that all for pity she could dye.

No longer can she now her shrieks command,  
And hardly she forbears, through awful fear  
To rushen forth, and with presumptuous hand  
To stay harsh Justice in its mild career  
On thee she calls, on thee her parent dear!  
(Ah! too remote to ward the shameful blow!)  
She sees no kind domestic visage near  
And soon a flood of tears begins to flow  
And gives a loose at last to unavailing woe.

But ah! what pen his piteous plight may trace?  
Or what device his loud laments explain?  
The form uncouth of his disguised face?  
The pallid hue that dyes his looks amain?  
The plenteous shower that does his cheek distain  
When he in abject wise implores the dame,  
No hopeth aught of sweet reprieve to gain,  
Or when from high she levels well her aim  
And through the thatch his cries, each falling stroke proclaim.

## PASTORAL BALLAD

Since Phyllis vouchsafed me a look,  
I never once dreamt of my vine  
May I lose both my pipe and my crook,  
If I knew of a kid that was mine!  
I prized every hour that went by,  
Beyond all that had pleas'd me before;  
But now they are past, and I sigh,  
And I grieve that I prized them no more.

But why do I languish in vain,  
Why wander thus pensively here?  
Oh! why did I come from the plain  
Where I fed on the smiles of my dear?  
They tell me, my favourite maid,  
The pride of that valley, is flown,  
Alas, where with her I have strayed  
I could wander with pleasure, alone.

When forced the fair nymph to forego,  
What anguish I felt at my heart!  
Yet I thought—but it might not be so—  
'Twas with pain that she saw me depart.  
She gazed, as I slowly withdrew,  
My path I could hardly discern;  
So sweetly she bade me adieu,  
I thought that she bade me return.

The pilgrim that journeys all day  
To visit some far distant shrine,  
If he bear but a relique away  
Is happy, nor heard to repine.  
Thus widely removed from the fair  
Where my vows, my devotion, I owe,  
Soft Hope is the relique I bear  
And my solace wherever I go

## THE DYING KID.

A tear bedews my Delia's eye,  
To think yon playful kid must die ;  
From crystal spring and flowery mead  
Must, in his prime of life, recede.

Erewhile in sportive circles round  
She saw him wheel, and frisk, and bound ;  
From rock to rock pursue his way  
And on the fearful margin play

Pleased on his various freaks to dwell  
She saw him climb my rustic cell  
Then eye my lawns with verdure bright,  
And seem all ravished at the sight.

She tells with what delight he stood  
To trace his features in the flood  
Then skipp'd aloof with quaint amaze  
And then drew near again to gaze.

She tells me how with eager speed  
He flew to hear my vocal reed  
And how with critic face profound,  
And steadfast ear devoured the sound.

His every frolic light as air  
Deserves the gentle Delia's care ;  
And tears bedew her tender eye,  
To think the playful kid must die.—

But knows my Delia, timely wise,  
How soon this blameless era flies ?  
While violence and craft succeed  
Unfair design and ruthless deed !

Soon would the vine his wounds deplore,  
And yield her purple gifts no more ;  
Oh soon, erased from every grove  
Were Delia's name, and Strephon's love.

No more those bowers might Strephon see,  
Where first he fondly gazed on thee ,  
No more those beds of flowerets find  
Which for thy charming brows he twined.

Each wayward passion soon would tear  
His bosom, now so void of care.  
And when they left his ebbing vein  
What but insipid age remain ?

Then mourn not the decrees of Fate  
That gave his life so short a date ,  
And I will join thy tenderest sighs  
To think that youth so swiftly flies

#### MUCH TASTE AND SMALL ESTATE

[From *The Progress of Taste* ]

See yonder hill, so green, so round,  
Its brow with ambient beeches crowned !  
'Twould well become thy gentle care  
To raise a dome to Venus there  
Pleas'd would the nymphs thy zeal survey ;  
And Venus, in their arms, repay  
'Twas such a shade, and such a nook  
In such a vale, near such a brook,  
From such a rocky fragment springing,  
That famed Apollo chose, to sing in.  
There let an altar wrought with art  
Engage thy tuneful patron's heart,  
How charming there to muse and warble  
Beneath his bust of breathing marble !  
With laurel wreath and mimic lyre  
That crown a poet's vast desire.

Then near it, scoop the vaulted cell  
Where Music's charming maids may dwell ;  
Prone to indulge thy tender passion,  
And make thee many an assignation.  
Deep in the grove's obscure retreat  
Be placed Minerva's sacred seat ;  
There let her awful turrets rise  
(For Wisdom flies from vulgar eyes )  
There her calm dictates shalt thou hear  
Distinctly strike thy listening ear  
And who would shun the pleasing labour  
To have Minerva for his neighbour?

• • •

But did the Muses haunt his cell?  
Or in his dome did Venus dwell?  
Did Pallas in his counsels share?  
The Deity god reward his prayer?  
Or did his real engage the fair?  
When all the structures shone complete  
Not much convenient, wondrous neat  
Adorned with gilding painting planting,  
And the fair guests alone were wanting.  
Ah me! (twas Damon's own confession)  
Came Poverty and took possession.

## WILLIAM COLLINS.

In the reaction against that sweeping violence of indiscriminate depreciation with which the school of poets and critics usually registered as Wordsworthian, but actually founded at midnight by William Blake and fortified at sunrise by William Wordsworth, was wont for some half a century to overwhelm the poetry and criticism of the century preceding, the name which of all properly belonging to that period has incomparably the most valid and solid claim to the especial and essential praise that denotes a poet from among other men of genius has hardly yet taken by general consent the place which is unquestionably its due. Even in his own age it was the fatally foolish and uncritical fashion to couple the name of Collins with that of Gray, as though they were poets

of the same order or kind. As an elegiac poet, Gray holds for all ages to come his unassailable and sovereign station—as a lyric poet he is simply unworthy to sit at the feet of Collins. Whether it may not be a greater thing than ever was done by the greater lyrist, to have written a poem of such high perfection and such universal appeal to the tenderest and the noblest depths of human feeling as Gray's *Elegy* is of course another and a wholly irrelevant question. But it is not a question which admits of debate at all, among men qualified to speak on such matters, that as a lyric poet Gray was not worthy to unloose the latches of his shoes. The fanfaronade and falsetto which impair the always rhetorically elaborate and sometimes genuinely sonorous notes of Gray were all but impossible to the finer touch of his precursor. In the little book of odes which dropped, a still born immortal, from the press, and was finally burnt up even to the last procurable copy by the hands of its author in a fever fit of angry despair there was hardly a single false note; and there were not many less than sweet or strong. There was, above all things, a purity of music, a clarity of style, to which I know of no parallel in English verse from the death of Andrew Marvell to the birth of William Blake. Here, in the twilight which followed on the splendid sunset of Pope, was at last a poet who was content to sing out what he had in him—to sing and not to say without a glimpse of wit or a flash of eloquence. These two valuable and admirable superfluities had for generations been regarded, not as fortuitous accessories but as indispensable requisites, to poetic genius. Nothing so clearly shows how much finer a sense of poetry than is usually attributed to him lay radically latent, when unobscured by theories or prepossessions, in the deliberate judgment of Dr Johnson, as his recognition in Collins of the eminent and exquisite faculty which he rightly refused to recognise in Gray. The strong lunged and heavy handed preacher of *The Vanity of Human Wishes* had an ear fine enough at least to distinguish the born lyric poet from him who had been made one, though self made. His recognition of Collins had been ready and generous in his youth; it was faithful and consistent in his old age. And in both seasons he stood then, almost as he stands now alone in the insight of his perception and the courage of his loyalty. For it needed some courage as well as some openness of mind and sureness of instinct to acknowledge as well as to appreciate a quality of merit far more alien than was the quality of Gray's best work from the merit of Pope and his scholars among

whose ranks the critic himself stood so honourably high as an ethic poet

Strange as the paradox may sound, it must yet once again be repeated, that the first indispensable faculty of a singer is ability to sing. There was but one man in the time of Collins who had in him a note of pure lyric song, a pulse of inborn music irresistible and indubitable, and that he was that man he could not open his lips without giving positive and instant proof. Poetry was his by birthright. To the very ablest of his compeers it was never more than a christening gift. The Muse gave birth to Collins, she did but give suck to Gray. In Goldsmith's verse, again, there is a priceless and adorable power of sweet human emotion which lay for the most part quite out of our poet's way. His range of flight was perhaps the narrowest but assuredly the highest of his generation. He could not be taught singing like a finch, but he struck straight upward for the sun like a lark. Again, he had an incomparable and infallible eye for landscape, a purity, fidelity, and simple-seeming subtlety of tone, unapproached until the more fiery but not more luminous advent of Burns. Among all English poets he has, it seems to me, the closest affinity to our great contemporary school of French landscape-painters. Corot on canvas might have signed his *Ode to Evening*, Millet might have given us some of his graver studies, and left them as he did no whit the less sweet for their softly austere and simply tender gravity. His magnificent Highland ode, so villainously defaced after his death by the most impudent interpolations on record, has much in it of Millais, and something also of Courbet when the simple genius of that star-crossed idoloclast was content with such noble and faithful use of freedom as he displayed in a picture of upland fell and tarnside copse in the curving hollow of a moor, which was once exhibited in London. Here and here only, for vigour of virile grasp and reach of possessive eyesight, Burns himself was forestalled if not excelled. Here too is a visible power, duly and tenderly subdued into subordination, of command upon human emotion and homely sympathy, less intimate than in Burns and less profound than in Wordsworth, but none the less actual and vivid, which we hardly find elsewhere in this perfect painter of still life or starlit vision. In his artistic tenderness of conscience and scrupulous self-mastery of hand he so closely resembles Mr Tennyson as once at least to provoke the same doubtful sense of jealous and admiring demur. A notable instance of this refined

excess in conscience is the exquisite recast of the originally exquisite second line in the *Ode to Evening*. Such things will make us now and then misdoubt whether some subtle and noble scruple may not in this case also have robbed us of jewels only less costly than two stanzas excised from the text of *The Miller's Daughter* full of the colour and breath and odour of a moon-charmed April twilight; if not even of some rapture as rare and precious as we are now forbidden to renew by repossession of the far and fairy light, the clear aerial melody of the once revealed and long recluse *Hesperides*. Yet I think and trust he would hardly have left so lovely and lovable a child of his earthen genius to fade perforce into compelled and unnatural forgetfulness, while the brother poem, beside which this had appeared as a twin-born sister was so gloriously refreshed with new blood and transfigured into riper beauty of more wide and deep delight, as were the revived and reinvigorated *Lotos Eaters*.

But Collins may claim of us a yet loftier note of praise than this and it is one which could hardly have been sounded by the capacious mouth of his good and true friend Johnson. He was the first English poet, after Milton's voice for the dwellers upon earth fell silent, to blow again the clarion of republican faith and freedom to reannounce with the passion of a lyric and heroic rapture the divine right and the godlike duty of tyrannicide. He too, in the high-toned phrase of Mr Browning like Milton, Burns, and Shelley was with us they watch from their graves. And on this side of the summit of fair fame he stands loftily alone between the sunset of Milton and the sunrise of Landor. I hardly think there are much nobler verses in all English than those in which the new Alceus, 'fancy blest indeed, has sung the myrtle-hidden sword that rid the sunlight of the first Plalistrad. For all her evil report among men on the score of passive obedience and regicide, Oxford has now and then turned out—in a double sense, we might say with reference to Shelley—sons who have loved the old cause as well as any reared by the nursing mother of Milton.

There is yet another memorable bond of communion which connects the fame of Collins with that of Milton in the past and with that of Shelley in the future. Between the elegy on Edward King and the elegy on John Keats came the far humbler and softer note, yet full of sweet native purity and sincerity by which Collins set the seal of a gentle consecration on the grave of the 'Druid

Thomson, a note to be as gently echoed by Wordsworth in commemoration of his own sweeter song and sadder end

The mention of Wordsworth's name reminds me of another but a casual coincidence between the fortunes of that great poet's work and of this his lyric and elegiac predecessor's. In both cases the generally accepted masterpiece of their lyric labour seems to me by no means the poem genuinely acceptable as such. Mr Arnold, with the helpful loyalty and sound discretion of a wise disciple, has noted as much in the case of Wordsworth, it is no less demonstrable a truth in the case of Collins. As surely as, for instance, the *Ode to Duty* is a work of greater perfection and more perfect greatness than that *On the Impressions of Immortality*, the *Ode on the Passions* is a work of less equal sustentation and purity of excellence than, for example, is the *Ode to Evening*. Yet of course its grace and vigour, its vivid and pliant dexterity of touch, are worthy of all their long inheritance of praise, and altogether it holds out admirably well to the happy and harmonious end, whereas the very *Ode to Liberty*, after an overture worthy of Milton's or of Handel's *Agonistes*, a prelude that peals as from beneath the triumphal band of the thunder-bearer, steadily subsides through many noble but ever less and less noble verses, towards a final couplet showing not so much the flatness of failure as the prostration of collapse.

Living both in an age and after an age of critical poetry, Collins, always alien alike from the better and from the worse influences of his day, has shown at least as plentiful a lack of any slightest critical instinct or training as ever did any poet on record, in his epistle to Hanmer on that worthy knight's 'inqualifiable' edition of Shakespeare. But his couplets, though incomparably inferior to Gray's, are generally spirited and competent as well as fluent and smooth.

The direct sincerity and purity of their positive and straightforward inspiration will always keep his poems fresh and sweet to the senses of all men. He was a solitary song-bird among many more or less excellent pipers and pianists. He could put more spirit of colour into a single stroke, more breath of music into a single note, than could all the rest of his generation into all the labours of their lives. And the sweet name and the lucid memory of his genius could only pass away with all relics and all records of lyric poetry in England.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

## ODE TO LIBERTY

*Strophe.*

Who shall awake the Spartan life,  
And call in solemn sounds to life,  
The youths, whose locks divinely spreading,  
Like vernal hyacinths in sullen hue,  
At once the breath of fear and virtue shedding,  
Applauding freedom loved of old to view?  
What new Alcæus, fancy-blest,  
Shall sing the sword, in myrtles drest,  
At wisdom's shrine awhile its flame concealing,  
(What place so fit to seal a deed renowned?)  
Till she her brightest lightnings round revealing  
It leaped in glory forth, and dealt her prompted wound!  
O goddess, in that feeling hour  
When most its sounds would court thy ears,  
Let not my shell's misguided power  
E'er draw thy sad, thy mindful tears.  
No, freedom, no, I will not tell  
How Rome, before thy weeping face,  
With heaviest sound, a giant-statue, fell,  
Pushed by a wild and artless race  
From off its wide ambitious base,  
When time his northern sons of spoil awoke,  
And all the blended work of strength and grace,  
With many a rude repeated stroke,  
And many a barbarous yell, to thousand fragments broke.

*Epode.*

Yet, even where'er the least appeared,  
The admiring world thy hand revered;  
Still 'midst the scattered states around,  
Some remnants of her strength were found;

They saw, by what escaped the storm,  
How wondrous rose her perfect form,  
How in the great, the laboured whole,  
Each mighty master poured his soul !  
For sunny Florence, seat of art,  
Beneath her vines preserved a part,  
Till they, whom science loved to name,<sup>1</sup>  
(O who could fear it?) quenched her flame.  
And lo, an humbler relic laid  
In jealous Pisa's olive shade !  
See small Marino joins the theme,  
Though least, not last in thy esteem :  
Strike, louder strike the ennobling strings  
To those, whose merchant sons were kings ;  
To him, who, decked with pearly pride,  
In Adria weds his green-haired bride ,  
Hail, port of glory, wealth, and pleasure,  
Ne'er let me change this Lydian measure :  
Nor e'er her former pride relate,  
To sad Liguria's bleeding state.  
Ah no ! more pleased thy haunts I seek,  
On wild Helvetia's mountains bleak  
(Where, when the favoured of thy choice,  
The daring archer heard thy voice ,  
Forth from his eyrie roused in dread,  
The ravening eagle northward fled ,)  
Or dwell in willowed meads more near,  
With those to whom thy stork is dear :  
Those whom the rod of Alva bruised,  
Whose crown a British queen refused !  
The magic works, thou feel'st the strains,  
One holier name alone remains ,  
The perfect spell shall then avail,  
Hail, nymph, adored by Britain, hail !

*Antistrophe*

Beyond the measure vast of thought,  
The works the wizard time has wrought !

<sup>1</sup> The Medici.

The Gaul, 'tis held of antique story,  
Saw Britain linked to his now adverse strand,  
No sea between nor cliff sublime and hoary  
He passed with unwet feet through all our land.  
To the blown Baltic then, they say,  
The wild waves found another way  
Where Orcas howls, his wolfish mountains rounding ;  
Till all the banded west at once 'gan rise,  
A wide wild storm even nature's self confounding  
Withering her giant sons with strange uncouth surprise.  
This pillared earth so firm and wide,  
By winds and inward labours torn,  
In thunders dread was pushed aside,  
And down the shouldering billows borne.  
And see, like gems, her laughing train,  
The little isles on every side,  
Mona, once hid from those who search the main,  
Where thousand elfin shapes abide,  
And Wight who checks the westering tide,  
For thee consenting heaven has each bestowed,  
A fair attendant on her sovereign pride  
To thee this blest divorce she owed,  
For thou hast made her vales thy loved, thy last abode.

*Second Epode.*

Then too, 'tis said, an hoary pile,  
'Midst the green navel of our isle,  
Thy shrine in some religious wood,  
O soul-enforcing goddess, stood !  
There oft the painted native's feet  
Were wont thy form celestial meet  
Though now with hopeless toil we trace  
Time's backward rolls, to find its place ;  
Whether the fiery tressèd Dane,  
Or Roman's self, o'erturned the fane,  
Or in what heaven left age it fell,  
'Twere hard for modern song to tell.

Yet still, if truth those beams infuse,  
Which guide at once, and charm the muse,  
Beyond yon braided clouds that lie,  
Paving the light-embroidered sky,  
Amidst the bright pavilioned plains,  
The beauteous model still remains  
There, happier than in islands blest,  
Or bowers by spring or Hebe drest,  
The chiefs who fill our Albion's story,  
In warlike weeds, retired in glory,  
Hear their consorted Druids sing  
Their triumphs to the immortal string

How may the poet now unfold  
What never tongue or numbers told?  
How learn, delighted and amazed,  
What hands unknown that fabric raised?  
Even now before his favoured eyes,  
In Gothic pride, it seems to rise!  
Yet Græcia's graceful orders join,  
Majestic through the mixed design.  
The secret builder knew to choose  
Each sphere-found gem of richest hues.  
Whate'er heaven's purer mould contains,  
When nearer suns emblaze its veins,  
There on the walls the patriot's sight  
May ever hang with fresh delight,  
And, graved with some prophetic rage,  
Read Albion's fame through every age.

Ye forms divine, ye laureat band,  
That near her inmost altar stand!  
Now soothe her to her blissful train  
Blithe concord's social form to gain,  
Concord, whose myrtle wand can steep  
Even anger's bloodshot eyes in sleep,  
Before whose breathing bosom's balm  
Rage drops his steel, and storms grow calm;  
Her let our sires and matrons hoar  
Welcome to Britain's ravaged shore;

Our youths, enamoured of the fair,  
 Play with the tangles of her hair  
 Till, in one loud applauding sound,  
 The nations shout to her around,  
 O how supremely art thou blest,  
 Thou, lady thou shalt rule the west!

## ODE.

[Written in the beginning of the year 1746.]

How sleep the brave, who sink to rest  
 By all their country's wishes blessed!  
 When spring with dewy fingers cold,  
 Returns to deck their hallowed mould,  
 She there shall dress a sweeter sod  
 Than fancy's feet have ever trod.

- By fairy hands their knell is rung  
 By forms unseen their dirge is sung;  
 There Honour comes, a pilgrim grey  
 To bless the turf that wraps their clay;  
 And Freedom shall awhile repair  
 To dwell, a weeping hermit, there!

## ODE TO EVENING.

If aught of oaten stop, or pastoral song,  
 May hope, chaste eve, to soothe thy modest ear  
     Like thy own solemn springs,  
     Thy springs, and dying gales,

O nymph reserved, while now the bright haired sun  
 Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts,  
     With brede ethereal wove,  
     O'erhang his wavy bed:

Now air is hushed, save where the weak-eyed bat  
With short, shrill shriek, flits by on leathern wing,  
Or where the beetle winds  
His small but sullen horn,

As oft he rises 'midst the twilight path,  
Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum :  
Now teach me, maid composed,  
To breathe some softened strain,

Whose numbers, stealing through thy darkening vale,  
May, not unseemly, with its stillness suit,  
As, musing slow, I hail  
Thy genial loved return !

For when thy folding star arising shows  
His paly circlet, at his warning lamp  
The fragrant hours, and elves  
Who slept in flowers the day,

And many a nymph who wreathes her brows with sedge,  
And sheds the freshening dew, and, lovelier still,  
The pensive pleasures sweet  
Prepare thy shadowy car

Then lead, calm votaress, where some sheety lake  
Cheers the lone heath, or some time-hallowed pile,  
Or upland fallows grey  
Reflect its last cool gleam

But when chill blustering winds, or driving rain,  
Forbid my willing feet, be mine the hut,  
That from the mountain's side,  
Views wilds, and swelling floods,

And hamlets brown, and dim-discovered spires ;  
And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all  
Thy dewy fingers draw  
The gradual dusky veil

While spring shall pour his showers, as oft he wont,  
And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest eve!

While summer loves to sport  
Beneath thy lingering light;

While fallow autumn fills thy lap with leaves;  
Or winter yelling through the troublous air  
Affrights thy shrinking train,  
And rudely rends thy robes;

So long, sure-found beneath the sylvan shed,  
Shall fancy friendship science, rose-lipped health  
Thy gentlest influence own,  
And hymn thy favourite name!

#### THE PASSIONS.

When Music, heavenly maid, was young,  
While yet in early Greece she sung  
The Passions oft, to hear her shell,  
Thronged around her magic cell,  
Exulting trembling raging, fainting,  
Possess beyond the muse's painting;  
By turns they felt the glowing mind  
Disturbed, delighted, raised, refined;  
Till once, 'tis said, when all were fired,  
Filled with fury rapt, inspired,  
From the supporting myrtles round  
They snatched her instruments of sound;  
And, as they oft had heard apart  
Sweet lessons of her forceful art,  
Each (for madness ruled the hour)  
Would prove his own expressive power

First Fear his hand, its skill to try,  
Amid the chords bewildered laid,  
And back recoiled, he knew not why  
Even at the sound himself had made.

Next Anger rushed , his eyes on fire,  
In lightnings owned his secret stings  
In one rude clash he struck the lyre,  
And swept with hurried hand the strings.

With woful measures wan Despair  
Low, sullen sounds his grief beguiled ,  
A solemn, strange, and mingled air ,  
'Twas sad by fits, by starts 'twas wild.

But thou, O Hope, with eyes so fair,  
What was thy delightful measure?  
Still it whispered promised pleasure,  
And bade the lovely scenes at distance hail !  
Still would her touch the strain prolong ,  
And from the rocks, the woods, the vale,  
She called on Echo still, through all the song ,  
And, where her sweetest theme she chose,  
A soft responsive voice was heard at every close,  
And Hope enchanted smiled, and waved her golden hair

And longer had she sung ,—but, with a frown,  
Revenge impatient rose  
He threw his blood-stained sword, in thunder, down ,  
And with a withering look,  
The war-denouncing trumpet took,  
And blew a blast so loud and dread,  
Were ne'er prophetic sounds so full of woe !  
And, ever and anon, he beat  
The doubling drum, with furious heat ,  
And though sometimes, each dreary pause between,  
Dejected Pity, at his side,  
Her soul-subduing voice applied,  
Yet still he kept his wild unaltered mien,  
While each strained ball of sight seemed bursting from  
his head.  
Thy numbers, Jealousy, to naught were fixed ;  
Sad proof of thy distressful state ,  
Of differing themes the veering song was mixed ,  
And now it courted love, now raving called on hate

With eyes upraised as one inspired,  
Pale Melancholy sat retired ;  
And, from her wild sequestered seat,  
In notes by distance made more sweet,  
Poured through the mellow horn her pensive soul  
And, dashing soft from rocks around,  
Bubbling runnels joined the sound  
Through glades and glooms the mingled measure stole,  
Or o'er some haunted stream, with fond delay  
Round an holy calm diffusing,  
Love of peace, and lonely musing  
In hollow murmurs died away  
But O ! how altered was its sprightlier tone,  
When Cheerfulness, a nymph of healthiest hue,  
Her bow across her shoulder flung  
Her buskins gemmed with morning dew  
Blew an inspiring air that dale and thicket rung  
The hunter's call, to faun and dryad known !  
The oak-crowned sisters, and their chaste-eyed queen,  
Satyrs and sylvan boys, were seen,  
Peeping from forth their alleys green  
Brown Exercise rejoiced to hear  
And Sport leapt up, and seized his beechen spear  
Last came Joy's ecstatic trial  
He, with viny crown advancing,  
First to the lively pipe his hand address  
But soon he saw the brisk awakening viol,  
Whose sweet entrancing voice he loved the best ;  
They would have thought who heard the strain  
They saw in Tempe's vale, her native maids,  
Amidst the festal sounding shades,  
To some unwearied minstrel dancing  
While, as his flying fingers crossed the strings,  
Love framed with Mirth a gay fantastic round :  
Loose were her tresses seen, her zone unbound ;  
And he, amidst his frolic play  
As if he would the charming air repay  
Shook thousand odours from his dewy wings

O Music! sphere-descended maid,  
Friend of pleasure, wisdom's aid!<sup>1</sup>  
Why, goddess! why, to us denied,  
Lay'st thou thy ancient lyre aside  
As, in that loved Athenian bower,  
You learned an all-commanding power,  
Thy mimic soul, O nymph endeared,  
Can well recall what then it heard,  
Where is thy native simple heart,  
Devote to virtue, fancy, art?  
Arise, as in that elder time,  
Warm, energetic, chaste, sublime!  
Thy wonders, in that godlike age,  
Fill thy recording sister's page—  
'Tis said, and I believe the tale,  
Thy humblest reed could more prevail,  
Had more of strength, diviner rage,  
Than all which charms this laggard age,  
E'en all at once together found,  
Cecilia's mingled world of sound—  
O bid our vain endeavours cease,  
Revive the just designs of Greece  
Return in all thy simple state!  
Confirm the tales her sons relate!

ODE ON THE DEATH OF MR. THOMSON.<sup>1</sup>

In yonder grave a druid lies,  
Where slowly winds the stealing wave,  
The year's best sweets shall duteous rise  
To deck its poet's sylvan grave.

In yon deep bed of whispering reeds  
His airy harp shall now be laid,  
That he, whose heart in sorrow bleeds,  
May love through life the soothing shade.

<sup>1</sup> The scene of the following stanzas is supposed to lie on the Thames, near Richmond.

Then maids and youths shall linger here,  
And, while its sounds at distance swell,  
Shall sadly seem in pity's ear  
To hear the woodland pilgrim's knell.

Remembrance oft shall haunt the shore  
When Thames in summer wreaths is drest,  
And oft suspend the dashing oar,  
To bid his gentle spirit rest !

And oft, as ease and health retire  
To breezy lawn, or forest deep,  
The friend shall view yon whitening spire,  
And 'mid the varied landscape weep.

But thou, who own'st that earthy bed,  
Ah ! what will every dirge avail ;  
Or tears, which love and pity shed,  
That mourn beneath the gilding sail ?

Yet lives there one whose heedless eye  
Shall scorn thy pale shrine glimmering near ?  
With him, sweet bard, may fancy die,  
And joy desert the blooming year.

But thou, lone stream, whose sullen tide  
No sedge-crowned sisters now attend,  
Now waft me from the green hill's side,  
Whose cold turf hides the buried friend !

And see—the fairy valleys fade ;  
Dun night has veiled the solemn view !  
Yet once again, dear parted shade,  
Meek nature's child, again adieu !

The genial meads, assigned to bless  
Thy life, shall mourn thy early doom ;  
Their blnds and shepherd girls shall dress  
With simple hands, thy rural tomb.

\* Richmond Church, in which Thomson was buried.

Long, long, thy stone and pointed clay  
 Shall melt the musing Briton's eyes  
 O vales and wild woods' shall he say,  
 In yonder grave your druid lies!

AN ODE ON THE POPULAR SUPERSTITIONS OF THE HIGHLANDS  
 OF SCOTLAND<sup>1</sup>

Inscribed to Mr Home, Author of *Douglas*

I

Home, thou return'st from Thames, whose naiads long  
 Have seen thee lingering with a fond delay  
 'Mid those soft friends, whose hearts, some future day,  
 Shall melt, perhaps, to hear thy tragic song  
 Go, not unmindful of that cordial youth<sup>2</sup>  
 Whom, long endeared, thou leav'st by Lavant's side,  
 Together let us wish him lasting truth,  
 And joy untainted with his destined bride.  
 Go! nor regardless, while these numbers boast  
 My short-lived bliss, forget my social name,  
 But think far off how, on the southern coast,  
 I met thy friendship with an equal flame<sup>1</sup>  
 Fresh to that soil thou turn'st, whose every vale  
 Shall prompt the poet, and his song demand  
 To thee thy copious subjects ne'er shall fail,  
 Thou need'st but take thy pencil to thy hand,  
 And paint what all believe who own thy genial land.

<sup>1</sup> The text here given is that in which this ode was first printed, in the Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, 1780. Of the passages within brackets some were supplied in that version, to fill up lacunæ, by Dr Carlyle, and some are from the later editions.

<sup>2</sup> Mr John Barrow, who introduced Home to Collins.

## II.

There must thou wake perforce thy Doric quill  
 'Tis Fancy's land to which thou set'st thy feet  
 Where still, 'tis said, the fairy people meet,  
 Beneath each birken shade, on mead or hill  
 There, each trim lass that skims the milky store  
 To the swart tribes their creamy bowl allots ;  
 By night they sip it round the cottage door  
 While airy minstrels warble jocund notes.  
 There every herd, by sad experience, knows  
 How winged with fate, their elf-shot arrows fly  
 When the sick ewe her summer food forgoes,  
 Or stretched on earth, the heart smit helpers lie.  
 Such airy beings awe the untutored swain  
 Nor thou, though learned, his homelier thoughts neglect ;  
 Let thy sweet muse the rural faith sustain ;  
 These are the themes of simple, sure effect,  
 That add new conquests to her boundless reign,  
 And fill, with double force, her heart-commanding strain.

## III.

Ev'n yet preserved, how often may'st thou hear  
 Where to the pole the Boreal mountains run,  
 Taught by the father to his listening son  
 Strange lays, whose power had charmed a Spenser's ear  
 At every pause, before thy mind possess,  
 Old Runic bards shall seem to rise around,  
 With uncouth lyres, in many-coloured vest,  
 Their matted hair with boughs fantastic crowned :  
 Whether thou bid'st the well taught hind repeat  
 The choral dirge that mourns some chieftain brave,  
 When every shrieking maid her bosom beat,  
 And strewed with choicest herbs his scented grave ;  
 Or whether sitting in the shepherd's shield<sup>1</sup>  
 Thou hear'st some sounding tale of war's alarms ;  
 When at the bugle's call, with fire and steel,  
 The sturdy clans poured forth their bony swarms,  
 And hostile brothers met to prove each other's arms

A hut among the mountains

## IV.

'Tis thine to sing, how, framing hideous spells,  
 In Sky's lone isle, the gifted wizard seer,  
 Lodged in the wintry cave with [fate's fell spear'],  
 Or in the depth of Uist's dark forest dwells  
 How they, whose sight such dreary dreams engross,  
 With their own vision oft astonished droop,  
 When, o'er the watery strath, or quaggy moss,  
 They see the gliding ghosts unbodied troop  
 Or, if in sports, or on the festive green,  
 Their [piercing] glance some fated youth descry,  
 Who now, perhaps, in lusty vigour seen,  
 And rosy health, shall soon lamented die.  
 For them the viewless forms of air obey,  
 Their bidding heed, and at their beck repair  
 They know what spirit brews the stormful day,  
 And heartless, oft like moody madness, stare  
 To see the phantom train their secret work prepare.

[Stanza v, and half of stanza vi, are missing in the MS]

What though far off, from some dark dell espied,  
 His glimmering mazes cheer the excursive sight,  
 Yet turn, ye wanderers, turn your steps aside,  
 Nor trust the guidance of that faithless light,  
 For watchful, lurking, 'mid the unrustling reed,  
 At those mirk hours the wily monster lies,  
 And listens oft to hear the passing steed,  
 And frequent round him rolls his sullen eyes,  
 If chance his savage wrath may some weak wretch surprise

## VII

Ah, luckless swain, o'er all unblest indeed<sup>1</sup>  
 Whom late bewildered in the dank, dark fen,  
 Far from his flocks and smoking hamlet then!  
 To that sad spot [his wayward fate shall lead]  
 On him, enraged, the fiend in angry mood,  
 Shall never look with pity's kind concern,  
 But instant, furious, raise the whelming flood  
 O'er its drowned banks, forbidding all return

<sup>1</sup> Inserted from the later editions

Or, if he meditate his wished escape,  
 To some dim hill, that seems uprising near,  
 To his faint eye the grim and grisly shape,  
 In all its terrors clad, shall wild appear  
 Meantime the watery surge shall round him rise,  
 Poured sudden forth from every swelling source.  
 What now remains but tears and hopeless sighs?  
 His fear-shook limbs have lost their youthly force,  
 And down the waves he floats, a pale and breathless corse.

## VIII.

For him in vain his anxious wife shall wait,  
 Or wander forth to meet him on his way;  
 For him in vain at to-fall of the day  
 His babes shall linger at the unclosing gate.  
 Ah, ne'er shall he return! Alone, if night  
 Her travelled limbs in broken slumbers steep,  
 With drooping willows drest, his mournful sprite  
 Shall visit sad, perchance, her silent sleep  
 Then he, perhaps, with moist and watery hand,  
 Shall fondly seem to press her shuddering cheek,  
 And with his blue-swoln face before her stand,  
 And, shivering cold, these piteous accents speak:  
 'Pursue, dear wife, thy daily toils pursue,  
 At dawn or dusk, industrious as before;  
 Nor e'er of me one helpless thought renew  
 While I lie weltering on the ostered shore,  
 Drown'd by the kelpie's wrath, nor e'er shall aid thee more!

## IX.

Unbounded is thy range; with varied style  
 Thy muse may like those feathery tribes which spring  
 From their rude rocks, extend her skirting wing  
 Round the moist marge of each cold Hebrid isle,  
 To that hoar pile which still its ruin shows  
 In whose small vaults a pigmy folk is found,  
 Whose bones the delver with his spade upthrows, ,  
 And culls them, wondering from the hallowed ground!

Or thither<sup>1</sup>, where, beneath the showery west,  
The mighty kings of three fair realms are laid,  
Once foes, perhaps, together now they rest,  
No slaves revere them, and no wars invade  
Yet frequent now, at midnight's solemn hour,  
The rifted mounds their yawning cells unfold,  
And forth the monarchs stalk with sovereign power,  
In pageant robes, and wreathed with sheeny gold,  
And on their twilight tombs aerial council hold.

## X.

But, O' o'er all, forget not Kilda's race,  
On whose bleak rocks, which brave the wasting tides,  
Fair nature's daughter, virtue, yet abides  
Go, just, as they, their blameless manners trace!  
Then to my ear transmit some gentle song,  
Of those whose lives are yet sincere and plain,  
Their bounded walks the rugged cliffs along,  
And all their prospect but the wintry main  
With sparing temperance, at the needful time,  
They drain the sainted spring, or, hunger-prest,  
Along the Atlantic rock undreading climb,  
And of its eggs despoil the solan's nest  
Thus blest in primal innocence, they live,  
Sufficed and happy with that frugal fare  
Which tasteful toil and hourly danger give  
Hard is their shallow soil, and bleak and bare,  
Nor ever vernal bee was heard to murmur there!

## XI

Nor need'st thou blush that such false themes engage  
Thy gentle mind, of fairer stores possess,  
For not alone they touch the village breast,  
But filled in elder time the historic page.  
There Shakespeare's self, with every garland crowned,  
[Flew to those fairy climes his fancy sheen<sup>2</sup>,]  
In musing hour, his wayward sisters found,  
And with their terrors drest the magic scene

<sup>1</sup> Iona<sup>2</sup> Inserted from the later editions

From them he sung, when 'mid his bold design,  
 Before the Scot afflicted and aghast,  
 The shadowy kings of Banquo's fated line  
 Through the dark cave in gleamy pageant passed.  
 Proceed, nor quit the tales which, simply told,  
 Could once so well my answering bosom pierce;  
 Proceed, in forceful sounds, and colours bold,  
 The native legends of thy land rehearse;  
 To such adapt thy lyre and suit thy powerful verse.

## XII.

In scenes like these, which, daring to depart  
 From sober truth, are still to nature true,  
 And call forth fresh delight to fancy's view  
 The heroic muse employed her Tasso's art!  
 How have I trembled, when, at Tancred's stroke,  
 Its gushing blood the gaping cypress poured  
 When each live plant with mortal accents spoke,  
 And the wild blast upheaved the vanished sword!  
 How have I sat, when piped the pensive wind,  
 To hear his harp by British Fairfax strung  
 Prevailing poet! whose undoubting mind  
 Believed the magic wonders which he sung!  
 Hence, at each sound, imagination glows;  
 [Hence, at each picture, vivid life starts here!]  
 Hence his warm lay with softest sweetness flows;  
 Melting it flows, pure, numerous, strong, and clear  
 And fills the impassioned heart, and wins the harmonious ear!

## XIII.

All hail, ye scenes that o'er my soul prevail!  
 Ye [spacious] friths and lakes, which, far away  
 Are by smooth Annan filled or pastoral Tay  
 Or Don's romantic springs, at distance hail!  
 The time shall come when I perhaps, may tread  
 Your lowly glens, o'erhung with spreading broom  
 Or o'er your stretching heaths, by fancy led  
 [Or o'er your mountains creep, in awful gloom!]

Inserted from the later editions.

Then will I dress once more the faded bower,  
Where Jonson sat in Drummond's [classic<sup>1</sup>] shade ;  
Or crop, from Tiviotdale, each [lyric flower<sup>1</sup>,]  
And mourn, on Yarrow's banks, [where Willy's laid<sup>1</sup>']  
Meantime, ye powers that on the plains which bore  
The cordial youth, on Lothian's plains, attend !—  
Where'er he dwell, on hill, or lowly moor,  
To him I lose, your kind protection lend,  
And, touched with love like mine, preserve my absent friend!

## DIRGE IN CYMBELINE

To fair Fidele's grassy tomb  
Soft maids and village hinds shall bring  
Each opening sweet of earliest bloom,  
And rifle all the breathing spring.

No wailing ghost shall dare appear  
To vex with shrieks this quiet grove ,  
But shepherd lads assembled here,  
And melting virgins own their love.

No withered witch shall here be seen ;  
No goblins lead their nightly crew .  
The female fays shall haunt the green,  
And dress thy grave with pearly dew !

The redbreast oft, at evening hours,  
Shall kindly lend his little aid,  
With hoary moss, and gathered flowers,  
To deck the ground where thou art laid.

<sup>1</sup> Inserted from the later editions.

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When howling winds and beating rain,  
In tempests shake the sylvan cell ;  
Or 'midst the chase, on every plain,  
The tender thought on thee shall dwell ;

Each lonely scene shall thee restore ;  
For thee the tear be duly shed  
Beloved till life can charm no more,  
And mourned till pity's self be dead.

## THOMAS GRAY.

[THOMAS GRAY was born in London on the 26th of December 1716. His father is described as 'a citizen and money scrivener', we should say nowadays, he was on the stock-exchange. He appears to have been a selfish, extravagant, and violent man. Mr Antrobus, Gray's uncle on the mother's side, was one of the assistant masters at Eton, and at Eton, under his care Gray was brought up. At Eton he formed a friendship with Horace Walpole, and with Richard West, whose father was Lord Chancellor of Ireland. At Cambridge Gray did not read mathematics and took no degree. He occupied himself with classical literature, history and modern languages, several of his translations and Latin poems date from this time. He intended to read law, but a few months after his leaving Cambridge, Horace Walpole invited him to be his companion on a tour through France and Italy. The friends visited Paris, Florence and Rome, and remained abroad together more than two years. Gray saw and noted much, on this journey were produced the best of his Latin poems. Walpole, however, the son of the Prime Minister, and rich, gave himself airs, a difference arose which made Gray separate from him and return alone to England. He was reconciled with Walpole a year or two later, but meanwhile his father died, in 1741, his mother went to live at Stoke, near Windsor, and Gray, with a narrow income of his own, gave up the law and settled himself in college at Cambridge. In 1742 he lost his friend West, the *Ode to the Spring* was written just before West's death, the *Ode on the Prospect of Eton*, the *Hymn to Adversity*, and the *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard*, were written not long after. The first of Gray's poems which appeared in print was the *Ode on the Prospect of Eton*, published in folio by Dodsley in 1747, 'little notice,' says Warton, 'was taken of it'. The *Elegy* was handed about in manuscript before its publication in 1750, it was popular instantly, and made Gray's reputation. In 1753 Gray lost his mother, to whom he owed everything, and whom he devotedly loved. In 1755 *The Progress of Poesy* was finished, and *The Bard* begun. The post of Poet-Laureate was offered to Gray in 1757, and declined by him. He applied to Lord Bute, in

1762, for the professorship of modern history at Cambridge, but in vain. Six years afterwards the professorship again became vacant, and the Duke of Grafton gave it to Gray without his applying for it. The year afterwards the Duke of Grafton was elected Chancellor of the University and Gray composed for his installation the well-known *Ode for Music*. It was the last of his works. He talked of giving lectures as professor of history but his health was bad, and his spirits were low. Gray was the most temperate of men, but he was full of hereditary gout. Travelling amused and revived him; he had made with much enjoyment journeys to Scotland, Wales, and the English Lakes, and in the last year of his life, 1771 he entertained a project of visiting Switzerland. But he was too unwell to make the attempt, and he remained at Cambridge. On the 24th of July while at dinner in the College hall, he was seized with illness: convulsions came on, and on the 30th of July 1771 at the age of fifty-four Gray died. [He was never married.]

James Brown, Master of Pembroke Hall at Cambridge, Gray's friend and executor in a letter written a fortnight after Gray's death to another of his friends, Dr. Wharton of Old Park, Durham, has the following passage:—

'Everything is now dark and melancholy in Mr Gray's room, not a trace of him remains there; it looks as if it had been for some time uninhabited, and the room bespoke for another inhabitant. The thoughts I have of him will last and will be useful to me the few years I can expect to live. He never spoke out, but I believe from some little expressions I now remember to have dropped from him, that for some time past he thought himself nearer his end than those about him apprehended.

*He never spoke out* In these four words is contained the whole history of Gray both as a man and as a poet. The words fell naturally and as it were by chance, from their writer's pen; but let us dwell upon them, and press into their meaning, for in following it we shall come to understand Gray.

He was in his fifty-fifth year when he died, and he lived in ease and leisure, yet a few pages hold all his poetry; *he never spoke out* in poetry. Still, the reputation which he has achieved by his few pages is extremely high. True, Johnson speaks of him with coldness and disparagement. Gray disliked Johnson, and refused to make his acquaintance; one might fancy that Johnson wrote with some irritation from this cause. But Johnson was not by nature fitted to do justice to Gray and to his poetry; this by itself is a sufficient explanation of the deficiencies of his criticism of Gray.

We may add a further explanation of them which is supplied by Mr Cole's papers 'When Johnson was publishing his *Life of Gray*,' says Mr Cole, 'I gave him several anecdotes, *but he was very anxious as soon as possible to get to the end of his labours*' Johnson was not naturally in sympathy with Gray, whose life he had to write, and when he wrote it he was in a hurry besides He did Gray injustice, but even Johnson's authority failed to make injustice, in this case, prevail Lord Macaulay calls the *Life of Gray* the worst of Johnson's *Lives*, and it had found many censurers before Macaulay Gray's poetical reputation grew and flourished in spite of it The poet Mason, his first biographer, in his epitaph equalled him with Pindar Britain has known, says Mason,

'a Homer's fire in Milton's strains,  
A Pindar's rapture in the lyre of Gray'

The immense vogue of Pope and of his style of versification had at first prevented the frank reception of Gray by the readers of poetry The *Elegy* pleased, it could not but please but Gray's poetry, on the whole, astonished his contemporaries at first more than it pleased them, it was so unfamiliar, so unlike the sort of poetry in vogue. It made its way, however, after his death, with the public as well as with the few, and Gray's second biographer, Mitford, remarks that 'the works which were either neglected or ridiculed by their contemporaries have now raised Gray and Collins to the rank of our two greatest lyric poets' Their reputation was established, at any rate, and stood extremely high, even if they were not popularly read. Johnson's disparagement of Gray was called 'petulant,' and severely blamed. Beattie, at the end of the eighteenth century, writing to Sir William Forbes, says 'Of all the English poets of this age Mr Gray is most admired, and I think with justice.' Cowper writes 'I have been reading Gray's works, and think him the only poet since Shakespeare entitled to the character of sublime. Perhaps you will remember that I once had a different opinion of him I was prejudiced.' Adam Smith says 'Gray joins to the sublimity of Milton the elegance and harmony of Pope, and nothing is wanting to render him, perhaps, the first poet in the English language, but to have written a little more.' And, to come nearer to our own times, Sir James Mackintosh speaks of Gray thus 'Of all English poets he was the most finished artist. He attained the highest degree of splendour of which poetical style seemed to be capable.'

In a poet of such magnitude, how shall we explain his scantiness of production? Shall we explain it by saying that to make of Gray a poet of this magnitude is absurd; that his genius and resources were small and that his production, therefore, was small also, but that the popularity of a single piece, the *Elegy*—a popularity due in great measure to the subject,—created for Gray a reputation to which he has really no right? He himself was not deceived by the favour shown to the *Elegy*. Gray told me with a good deal of acrimony writes Dr Gregory that the *Elegy* owed its popularity entirely to the subject, and that the public would have received it as well if it had been written in prose.' This is too much to say the *Elegy* is a beautiful poem, and in admiring it the public showed a true feeling for poetry. But it is true that the *Elegy* owed much of its success to its subject, and that it has received a too unmeasured and unbounded praise.

Gray himself, however maintained that the *Elegy* was not his best work in poetry and he was right. High as is the praise due to the *Elegy* it is yet true that in other productions of Gray he exhibits poetical qualities even higher than those exhibited in the *Elegy*. He deserves, therefore, his extremely high reputation as a poet, although his critics and the public may not always have praised him with perfect judgment. We are brought back, then, to the question. How in a poet so really considerable, are we to explain his scantiness of production?

Scanty Gray's production, indeed, is so scanty that to supplement our knowledge of it by a knowledge of the man is in this case of peculiar interest and service. Gray's letters and the records of him by his friends have happily made it possible for us thus to know him, and to appreciate his high qualities of mind and soul. Let us see these in the man first, and then observe how they appear in his poetry and why they cannot enter into it more freely and inspire it with more strength, render it more abundant.

We will begin with his acquirements. Mr Gray was, writes his friend Temple, perhaps the most learned man in Europe. He knew every branch of history both natural and civil had read all the original historians of England, France, and Italy; and was a great antiquarian. Criticism, metaphysics, morals, politics, made a principal part of his study. Voyages and travels of all sorts were his favourite amusements and he had a fine taste in painting, prints, architecture and gardening. The notes in his

interleaved copy of Linnæus remained to show the extent and accuracy of his knowledge in the natural sciences, particularly in botany, zoology, and entomology. Entomologists testified that his account of English insects was more perfect than any that had then appeared. His notes and papers, of which some have been published, others remain still in manuscript, give evidence, besides, of his knowledge of literature ancient and modern, geography and topography, painting, architecture and antiquities, and of his curious researches in heraldry. He was an excellent musician. Sir James Mackintosh reminds us, moreover, that to all the other accomplishments and merits of Gray we are to add this 'that he was the first discoverer of the beauties of nature in England, and has marked out the course of every picturesque journey that can be made in it.'

Acquirements take all their value and character from the power of the individual storing them. Let us take, from amongst Gray's observations on what he read, enough to show us his power. Here are criticisms on three very different authors, criticisms without any study or pretension, but just thrown out in chance letters to his friends. First, on Aristotle —

'In the first place he is the hardest author by far I ever meddled with. Then he has a dry conciseness that makes one imagine one is perusing a table of contents rather than a book. It tastes for all the world like chopped hay, or rather like chopped logic, for he has a violent affection to that art, being in some sort his own invention, so that he often loses himself in little trifling distinctions and verbal niceties, and what is worse, leaves you to extricate yourself as you can. Thirdly, he has suffered vastly by his transcribers, as all authors of great brevity necessarily must. Fourthly and lastly, he has abundance of fine, uncommon things, which make him well worth the pains he gives one. You see what you have to expect.'

Next, on Isocrates —

'It would be strange if I should find fault with you for reading Isocrates, I did so myself twenty years ago, and in an edition at least as bad as yours. The Panegyric, the De Pace, Areopagitic, and Advice to Philip, are by far the noblest remains we have of this writer, and equal to most things extant in the Greek tongue, but it depends on your judgment to distinguish between his real and occasional opinion of things, as he directly contradicts in one place what he has advanced in another, for example, in the Panathenaic and the De Pace, on the naval power of Athens, the latter of the two is undoubtedly his own undisguised sentiment.'

After hearing Gray on Isocrates and Aristotle, let us hear him on Froissart —

I rejoice you have met with Froissart, he is the Herodotus of a barbarous age; had he but had the luck of writing in as good a language, he might have been immortal. His locomotive disposition (for then there was no other way of learning things), his simple curiosity his religious credulity were much like those of the old Grecian. When you have *next* *cherished* as to get to the end of him, there is Monstrelet waits to take you up, and will set you down at Philip de Commines; but previous to all these, you should have read Villhardouin and Joinville.

Those judgments, with their true and clear ring, evince the high quality of Gray's mind, his power to command and use his learning. But Gray was a poet; let us hear him on a poet, on Shakespeare. We must place ourselves in the full midst of the eighteenth century and of its criticism. Gray's friend, West, had praised Racine for using in his dramas the language of the times and that of the purest sort; and he had added I will not decide what style is fit for our English stage, but I should rather choose one that bordered upon Cato, than upon Shakespeare. Gray replies —

As to matter of style, I have this to say: The language of the age is never the language of poetry except among the French, whose verse, where the thought does not support it, differs in nothing from prose. Our poetry on the contrary has a language peculiar to itself to which almost every one that has written has added something. In truth, Shakespeare's language is one of his principal beauties; and he has no less advantage over your Addisons and Rowes in this, than in those other great excellences you mention. Every word in him is a picture. Pray put me the following lines into the tongue of our modern dramatics —

But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,

Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass —

and what follows. To me they appear untranslatable; and if this be the case, our language is greatly degenerated.

It is impossible for a poet to lay down the rules of his own art with more insight, soundness, and certainty. Yet at that moment in England there was perhaps not one other man, besides Gray capable of writing the passage just quoted.

Gray's quality of mind, then, we see; his quality of soul will no less bear inspection. His reserve, his delicacy his distaste for many of the persons and things surrounding him in the Cambridge of that day — this silly dirty place, as he calls it,—have produced

an impression of Gray as being a man falsely fastidious, finical, effeminate. But we have already had that grave testimony to him from the Master of Pembroke Hall 'The thoughts I have of him will last, and will be useful to me the few years I can expect to live' And here is another to the same effect from a younger man, from Gray's friend Nicholls —

'You know,' he writes to his mother, from abroad, when he heard of Gray's death, 'that I considered Mr Gray as a second parent, that I thought only of him, built all my happiness on him, talked of him for ever, wished him with me whenever I partook of any pleasure, and flew to him for refuge whenever I felt any uneasiness To whom now shall I talk of all I have seen here? Who will teach me to read, to think, to feel? I protest to you, that whatever I did or thought had a reference to him If I met with any chagrins, I comforted myself that I had a treasure at home, if all the world had despised and hated me, I should have thought myself perfectly recompensed in his friendship There remains only one loss more, if I lose you, I am left alone in the world At present I feel that I have lost half of myself'

Testimonies such as these are not called forth by a fastidious effeminate weakling, they are not called forth, even, by mere qualities of mind, they are called forth by qualities of soul And of Gray's high qualities of soul, of his *σπουδαιότης*, his excellent seriousness, we may gather abundant proof from his letters Writing to Mason who had just lost his father, he says —

'I have seen the scene you describe, and know how dreadful it is, I know too I am the better for it We are all idle and thoughtless things, and have no sense, no use in the world any longer than that sad impression lasts, the deeper it is engraved the better'

And again, on a like occasion to another friend —

'He who best knows our nature (for he made us what we are) by such afflictions recalls us from our wandering thoughts and idle merriment, from the insolence of youth and prosperity, to serious reflexion, to our duty, and to himself, nor need we hasten to get rid of these impressions Time (by appointment of the same Power) will cure the smart and in some hearts soon blot out all the traces of sorrow, but such as preserve them longest (for it is partly left in our own power) do perhaps best acquiesce in the will of the chastiser'

And once more to Mason, in the very hour of his wife's death, Gray was not sure whether or not his letter would reach Mason before the end —

If the worst be not yet past, you will neglect and pardon me but if the last struggle be over if the poor object of your long anxieties be no longer sensible to your kindness or to her own sufferings, allow me, at least to idea, (for what could I do were I present, more than this?) to sit by you in silence and pity from my heart not her who is at rest, but you, who lose her. May He, who made us, the Master of our pleasures and of our pains, support you! Adieu.

Seriousness, character was the foundation of things with him; where this was lacking he was always severe, whatever might be offered to him in its stead. Voltaire's literary genius charmed him, but the faults of Voltaire's nature he felt so strongly that when his young friend Nicholls was going abroad in 1771 just before Gray's death, he said to him I have one thing to beg of you which you must not refuse. Nicholls answered You know you have only to command what is it? Do not go to see Voltaire, said Gray and then added 'No one knows the mischief that man will do. Nicholls promised compliance with Gray's injunction

but what, he asked, could a visit from me signify? Every tribute to such a man signifies, Gray answered. He admired Dryden, admired him, even, too much; had too much felt his influence as a poet. He told Beattie that if there was any excellence in his own numbers, he had learned it wholly from that great poet; and writing to Beattie afterwards he recurs to Dryden, whom Beattie, he thought, did not honour enough as a poet 'Remember Dryden, he writes, and be blind to all his faults. Yes, his faults as a poet; but on the man Dryden, nevertheless, his sentence is stern. Speaking of the Poet Laureateship,

Dryden, he writes to Mason was as disgraceful to the office from his character as the poorest scribbler could have been from his verses. Even where crying blemishes were absent, the want of weight and depth of character in a man deprived him, in Gray's judgment, of serious significance. He says of Hume 'Is not that naïveté and good-humour which his admirers celebrate in him, owing to this, that he has continued all his days an infant, but one that has unhappily been taught to read and write?'

And with all this strenuous seriousness, a pathetic sentiment, and an element, likewise, of sportive and charming humour At Keswick, by the lakeside on an autumn evening he has the accent of the *Rhodies* or of Obermann, or Wordsworth —

In the evening walked down alone to the lake by the side of Crow Park after sunset and saw the solemn colouring of light draw on, the last gleam

of sunshine fading away on the hill tops the deep serene of the waters, and the long shadows of the mountains thrown across them, till they nearly touched the hithermost shore At distance heard the murmur of many water-falls, not audible in the day-time Wished for the Moon, but she was dark to me and silent, hid in her vacant interlunar cave'

Of his humour and sportiveness his delightful letters are full, his humour appears in his poetry too, and is by no means to be passed over there Horace Walpole said that 'Gray never wrote anything easily but things of humour, humour was his natural and original turn'

Knowledge, penetration, seriousness, sentiment, humour, Gray had them all, he had the equipment and endowment for the office of poet But very soon in his life appear traces of something obstructing, something disabling, of spirits failing, and health not sound, and the evil increases with years He writes to West in 1737 —

'Low spirits are my true and faithful companions, they get up with me, go to bed with me, make journeys and returns as I do, nay and pay visits and will even affect to be jocose and force a feeble laugh with me, but most commonly we sit alone together, and are the prettiest insipid company in the world'

The tone is playful, Gray was not yet twenty-one. 'Mine,' he tells West four or five years later, 'mine, you are to know, is a white Melancholy, or rather *Leucocholy*, for the most part, which, though it seldom laughs or dances, nor ever amounts to what one calls joy or pleasure, yet is a good easy sort of a state.' But, he adds in this same letter —

But there is another sort, black indeed, which I have now and then felt, that has something in it like Tertullian's rule of faith, *Credo quia impossibile est*, for it believes, nay, is sure of everything that is unlikely, so it be not frightful, and on the other hand excludes and shuts its eyes to the most possible hopes, and everything that is pleasurable, from this the Lord deliver us! for none but he and sunshiny weather can do it'

Six or seven years pass, and we find him writing to Wharton from Cambridge thus —

'The spirit of laziness (the spirit of this place) begins to possess even me, that have so long declaimed against it. Yet has it not so prevailed, but that I feel that discontent with myself, that *ennui*, that ever accompanies it in its beginnings Time will settle my conscience, time will reconcile my languid companion to me, we shall smoke, we shall tipple, we shall doze

together we shall have our little jokes, like other people, and our long stories. Brandy will finish what port began and, a month after the time, you will see in some corner of a London Evening Post, Yesterday died the Rev Mr John Gray Senior Fellow of Clare Hall, a facetious companion, and well-respected by all who knew him.

The humorous advertisement ends, in the original letter with a Hogarthian touch which I must not quote. Is it Leucocholy or is it Melancholy which predominates here? at any rate, this entry in his diary six years later is black enough.—

*Insomnia crebra, atque exurgenti sævus quidam doloris sensus; frequens eorum in regione sternal oppressio et cardialgia gravis sine sensu.*

And in 1757 he writes to Hurd —

To be employed is to be happy This principle of mine (and I am convinced of its truth) has, as usual, no influence on my practice. I am alone, and *swayed* to the last degree, yet do nothing. Indeed I have one excuse my health (which you have so kindly enquired after) is not extraordinary. It is no great malady but several little ones, that seem brewing no good to me.

From thence to the end his languor and depression, though still often relieved by occupation and travel, keep fatally gaining on him. At last the depression became constant, became mechanical.

Travel I must, he writes to Dr Wharton, or cease to exist. Till this year I hardly knew what *mechanical* low spirits were; but now I even tremble at an east wind. Two months afterwards, he died.

What wonder that with this troublous cloud, throughout the whole term of his manhood, brooding over him and weighing him down, Gray finely endowed though he was, richly stored with knowledge though he was, yet produced so little, found no full and sufficient utterance, *never* as the Master of Pembroke Hall said, *spoke out*. He knew well enough, himself, how it was with him.

'My *verve* is at best, you know (he writes to Mason), 'of so delicate a constitution, and has such weak nerves, as not to stir out of its chamber above three days in a year. And to Horace Walpole he says. As to what you say to me civilly that I ought to write more, I will be candid, and avow to you, that till fourscore and upward, whenever the humour takes me, I will write because I like it, and because I like myself better when I do so. If I do not write much, it is because I cannot. How simply said, and

how truly also ' Fain would a man like Gray speak out if he could, he 'likes himself better' when he speaks out, if he does not speak out, 'it is because I cannot.'

Bonstetten, that mercurial Swiss who died in 1832 at the age of eighty-seven, having been younger and livelier from his sixtieth year to his eightieth than at any other time in his life, paid a visit in his early days to Cambridge, and saw much of Gray, to whom he attached himself with devotion. Gray, on his part, was charmed with his young friend, 'I never saw such a boy,' he writes, 'our breed is not made on this model' Long afterwards, Bonstetten published his reminiscences of Gray 'I used to tell Gray,' he says, 'about my life and my native country, but *his* life was a sealed book to me, he never would talk of himself, never would allow me to speak to him of his poetry. If I quoted lines of his to him, he kept silence like an obstinate child. I said to him sometimes "Will you have the goodness to give me an answer?" But not a word issued from his lips' *He never spoke out*. Bonstetten thinks that Gray's life was poisoned by an unsatisfied sensibility, was withered by his having never loved, by his days being passed in the dismal cloisters of Cambridge, in the company of a set of monastic book-worms, 'whose existence no honest woman ever came to cheer' Sainte-Beuve, who was much attracted and interested by Gray, doubts whether Bonstetten's explanation of him is admissible, the secret of Gray's melancholy he finds rather in the sterility of his poetic talent, 'so distinguished, so rare, but so stinted,' in the poet's despair at his own unproductiveness.

But to explain Gray, we must do more than allege his sterility, as we must look further than to his reclusion at Cambridge. What caused his sterility? Was it his ill-health, his hereditary gout? Certainly we will pay all respect to the powers of hereditary gout for afflicting us poor mortals. But Goethe, after pointing out that Schiller, who was so productive, was 'almost constantly ill,' adds the true remark that it is incredible how much the spirit can do, in these cases, to keep up the body. Pope's animation and activity through all the course of what he pathetically calls 'that long disease, my life,' is an example presenting itself signally, in Gray's own country and time, to confirm what Goethe here says. What gave the power to Gray's reclusion and ill-health to induce his sterility?

The reason, the indubitable reason as I cannot but think it, I have already given elsewhere. Gray, a born poet, fell upon an

age of prose. He fell upon an age whose task was such as to call forth in general men's powers of understanding wit and cleverness, rather than their deepest powers of mind and soul. As regards literary production, the task of the eighteenth century in England was not the poetic interpretation of the world, its task was to create a plain, clear straightforward, efficient prose. Poetry obeyed the bent of mind requisite for the due fulfilment of this task of the century. It was intellectual argumentative, ingenious; not seeing things in their truth and beauty not interpretative. Gray with the qualities of mind and soul of a genuine poet, was isolated in his century. Maintaining and fortifying them by lofty studies, he yet could not fully educe and enjoy them; the want of a genial atmosphere, the failure of sympathy in his contemporaries, were too great. Born in the same year with Milton, Gray would have been another man; born in the same year with Burns, he would have been another man. A man born in 1608 could profit by the larger and more poetic scope of the English spirit in the Elizabethan age; a man born in 1759 could profit by that European renewing of men's minds of which the great historical manifestation is the French Revolution. Gray's alert and brilliant young friend, Bonstetten, who would explain the void in the life of Gray by his having never loved, Bonstetten himself loved, married, and had children. Yet at the age of fifty he was bidding fair to grow old, dismal and torpid like the rest of us, when he was roused and made young again for some thirty years, says M. Sainte-Beuve, by the events of 1789. If Gray like Burns, had been just thirty years old when the French Revolution broke out, he would have shown, probably productiveness and animation in plenty. Coming when he did and endowed as he was, he was a man born out of date, a man whose full spiritual flowering was impossible. The same thing is to be said of his great contemporary Butler the author of the *Analogy*. In the sphere of religion, which touches that of poetry Butler was impelled by the endowment of his nature to strive for a profound and adequate conception of religious things, which was not pursued by his contemporaries, and which at that time, and in that atmosphere of mind, was not fully attainable. Hence, in Butler too, a dissatisfaction, a weariness, as in Gray; great labour and weariness, great disappointment, pain and even vexation of mind. A sort of spiritual east wind was at that time blowing; neither Butler nor Gray could flower. They never speak out.

Gray's poetry was not only stinted in quantity by reason of the age wherein he lived, it suffered somewhat in quality also. We have seen under what obligation to Dryden Gray professed himself to be, 'if there was any excellence in his numbers, he had learned it wholly from that great poet.' It was not for nothing that he came when Dryden had lately 'embellished,' as Johnson says, English poetry, had 'found it brick and left it marble.' It was not for nothing that he came just when 'the English ear,' to quote Johnson again, 'had been accustomed to the melliflence of Pope's numbers, and the diction of poetry had grown more splendid.' Of the intellectualities, ingenuities, personifications, of the movement and diction of Dryden and Pope, Gray caught something, caught too much. We have little of Gray's poetry, and that little is not free from the faults of his age. Therefore it was important to go for aid, as we did, to Gray's life and letters, to see his mind and soul there, and to corroborate from thence that high estimate of his quality which his poetry, indeed, calls forth, but does not establish so amply and irresistibly as one could desire.

For a just criticism it does, however, clearly establish it. The difference between genuine poetry and the poetry of Dryden, Pope, and all their school, is briefly this, their poetry is conceived and composed in their wits, genuine poetry is conceived and composed in the soul. The difference between the two kinds of poetry is immense. They differ profoundly in their modes of language, they differ profoundly in their modes of evolution. The poetic language of our eighteenth century in general is the language of men composing *without their eye on the object*, as Wordsworth excellently said of Dryden, language merely recalling the object, as the common language of prose does, and then dressing it out with a certain smartness and brilliancy for the fancy and understanding. This is called 'splendid diction.' The evolution of the poetry of our eighteenth century is likewise intellectual, it proceeds by ratiocination, antithesis, ingenious turns and conceits. This poetry is often eloquent, and always, in the hands of such masters as Dryden and Pope, clever, but it does not take us much below the surface of things, it does not give us the emotion of seeing things in their truth and beauty. The language of genuine poetry, on the other hand, is the language of one composing with his eye on the object, its evolution is that of a thing which has been plunged in the poet's soul until it comes forth naturally and necessarily. This sort of evolution is infinitely

simpler than the other and infinitely more satisfying the same thing is true of the genuine poetic language likewise. But they are both of them, also infinitely harder of attainment; they come only from those who, as Emerson says, 'live from a great depth of being.

Goldsmith disparaged Gray who had praised his *Traveller* and indeed in the poem on the *Alliance of Education and Government* had given him hints which he used for it. In retaliation let us take from Goldsmith himself a specimen of the poetic language of the eighteenth century

No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale —

there is exactly the poetic diction of our prose century! rhetorical, ornate,—and, poetically quite false. Place beside it a line of genuine poetry such as the

In cradle of the rude, imperious surge

of Shakespeare and all its falseness instantly becomes apparent.

Dryden's poem on the death of Mrs. Killigrew is, says Johnson, undoubtedly the noblest ode that our language ever has produced. In this vigorous performance Dryden has to say what is interesting enough, that not only in poetry did Mrs. Killigrew excel, but she excelled in painting also. And thus he says it —

To the next realm she stretch'd her way

For Painters near adjoining lay —

A plenteous province and alluring prey

A Chamber of Dependencies was framed

(As conquerors will never want pretence

When arm'd to justify the offence),

And the whole fief, in right of Poetry she claim'd.

The intellectual, ingenious, superficial evolution of poetry of this school could not be better illustrated. Place beside it Pindar's

αἰὼν ἀφελήη

ὅτε ἔγχετ' αὖτ' Ἀλαϊδὲς κατὰ Πηλεΐ,

αὖτ' κατὰ δ' Ἰσθμίου Κόδρου

A secure time fell to the lot neither of Peleus the son of Æacus, nor of the godlike Cadmus; howbeit these are said to have had, of all mortals, the supreme of happiness, who heard the golden-snooded Muses sing,—on the mountain the one heard them, the other in seven-gated Thebes,

There is the evolution of genuine poetry and such poetry kills Dryden's the moment it is put near it.

Gray's production was scanty, and scanty, as we have seen, it could not but be. Even what he produced is not always pure in diction, true in evolution. Still, with whatever drawbacks, he is alone or almost alone (for Collins has something of the like merit) in his age. Gray said himself that 'the style he aimed at was extreme conciseness of expression, yet pure, perspicuous, and musical.' Compared, not with the work of the great masters of the golden ages of poetry, but with the poetry of his own contemporaries in general, Gray's may be said to have reached, in style, the excellence at which he aimed, while the evolution, also, of such a piece as his *Progress of Poesy*, must be accounted not less noble and sound than its style.

MATTHEW ARNOLD

## ODE ON THE SPRING.

Lo! where the rosy-bosom'd Hours,  
Fair Venus' train, appear  
Disclose the long-expecting flowers,  
And wake the purple year!  
The Attic warbler pours her throat,  
Responsive to the cuckoo's note,  
The untaught harmony of spring  
While, whispering pleasure as they fly  
Cool Zephyrs thro' the clear blue sky  
Their gathered fragrance fling

Where'er the oak's thick branches stretch  
A broader browner shade,  
Where'er the rude and moss-grown beech  
O'er-canopies the glade,  
Beside some water's rushy brink  
With me the Muse shall sit, and think  
(At ease reclined in rustic state)  
How vain the ardour of the crowd,  
How low how little are the proud,  
How indigent the great!

Still is the tolling hand of Care  
The panting herds repose  
Yet hark, how thro' the peopled air  
The busy murmur glows!  
The insect youth are on the wing,  
Eager to taste the honied spring,  
And float amid the liquid noon  
Some lightly o'er the current skim,  
Some shew their gayly gilded trim  
Quick-glancing to the sun.

To Contemplation's sober eye  
 Such is the race of Man  
 And they that creep, and they that fly,  
 Shall end where they began  
 Alike the Busy and the Gay  
 But flutter thro' life's little day,  
 In Fortune's varying colours drest ·  
 Brushed by the hand of rough Mischance,  
 Or chilled by Age, their airy dance  
 They leave, in dust to rest.

Methinks I hear, in accents low,  
 The sportive kind reply  
 Poor moralist! and what art thou?  
 A solitary fly!  
 Thy joys no glittering female meets,  
 No hive hast thou of hoarded sweets,  
 No painted plumage to display  
 On hasty wings thy youth is flown,  
 Thy sun is set, thy spring is gone—  
 We frolic while 'tis May

#### ODE ON A DISTANT PROSPECT OF ETON COLLEGE

Ye distant spires, ye antique towers,  
 That crown the watery glade,  
 Where grateful Science still adores  
 Her Henry's holy shade,  
 And ye, that from the stately brow  
 Of Windsor's heights th' expanse below  
 Of grove, of lawn, of mead survey,  
 Whose turf, whose shade, whose flowers among  
 Wanders the hoary Thames along  
 His silver-winding way  
 Ah, happy hills! ah, pleasing shade!  
 Ah, fields beloved in vain!  
 Where once my careless childhood strayed,  
 A stranger yet to pain!

I feel the gales that from ye blow  
A momentary bliss bestow  
As waving fresh their gladsome wing  
My weary soul they seem to soothe,  
And, redolent of joy and youth,  
To breathe a second spring.

Say father Thames, for thou hast seen  
Full many a sprightly race  
Disporting on thy margin green,  
The paths of pleasure trace ;  
Who foremost now delight to cleave,  
With pliant arm, thy glassy wave ?  
The captive linnet which enthrall ?  
What idle progeny succeed  
To chase the rolling circle's speed,  
Or urge the flying ball ?

While some on earnest business bent  
Their murmuring labours ply  
'Gainst graver hours that bring constraint  
To sweeten liberty  
Some bold adventurers disdain  
The limits of their little reign,  
And unknown regions dare descry  
Still as they run they look behind,  
They hear a voice in every wind,  
And snatch a fearful joy

Gay hope is theirs by fancy fed,  
Less pleasing when possess'd  
The tear forgot as soon as shed,  
The sunshine of the breast  
Their buxom health, of rosy hue,  
Wild wit, invention ever new  
And lively cheer of vigour born ;  
The thoughtless day the easy night,  
The spirits pure, the slumbers light,  
That fly th' approach of morn.

Alas ! regardless of their doom  
The little victims play ,  
No sense have they of ills to come,  
Nor care beyond to-day  
Yet see, how all around them wait  
The ministers of human fate,  
And black Misfortune's baleful train !  
Ah, show them where in ambush stand,  
To sieze their prey, the murderous band !  
Ah, tell them, they are men !

These shall the fury Passions tear,  
The vultures of the mind,  
Disdainful Anger, pallid Fear,  
And Shame that skulks behind ,  
Or pining Love shall waste their youth,  
Or Jealousy, with rankling tooth,  
That inly gnaws the secret heart ,  
And Envy wan, and faded Care,  
Grim-visaged comfortless Despair,  
And Sorrow's piercing dart

Ambition this shall tempt to rise,  
Then whirl the wretch from high,  
To bitter Scorn a sacrifice,  
And grinning Infamy  
The stings of Falsehood those shall try,  
And hard Unkindness' altered eye,  
That mocks the tear it forced to flow ,  
And keen Remorse with blood defiled,  
And moody Madness laughing wild  
Amid severest woe.

Lo ! in the vale of years beneath  
A griesly troop are seen,  
The painful family of Death,  
More hideous than their queen  
This racks the joints, this fires the veins,  
That every labouring sinew strains,

Those in the deeper vitals rage :  
Lo ! Poverty, to fill the band,  
That numbs the soul with icy hand,  
And slow-consuming Age.

To each his sufferings all are men,  
Condemnd alike to groan ;  
The tender for another's pain,  
The unfeeling for his own.  
Yet, ah ! why should they know their fate,  
Since sorrow never comes too late,  
And happiness too swiftly flies ?  
Thought would destroy their paradise.  
No more ;—where ignorance is bliss,  
'Tis folly to be wise.

## HYMN TO ADVERSITY

Daughter of Jove, relentless power  
Thou tamer of the human breast,  
Whose iron scourge and torturing hour  
The bad affright, afflict the best !  
Bound in thy adamant chain,  
The proud are taught to taste of pain,  
And purple tyrants vainly groan  
With pangs unfelt before, unplied and alone.

When first thy sire to send on earth  
Virtue, his darling child, designed,  
To thee he gave the heavenly birth,  
And bade to form her infant mind.  
Stern rugged nurse ! thy rigid lore  
With patience many a year she bore :  
What sorrow was, thou had'st her know  
And from her own she learned to melt at others' woe.

Scared at thy frown terrific, fly  
Self-pleasing Folly's idle brood,  
Wild Laughter, Noise, and thoughtless Joy,  
And leave us leisure to be good.  
Light they disperse, and with them go  
The summer friend, the flattering foe,  
By vain Prosperity received,  
To her they vow their truth, and are again believed.

Wisdom in sable garb arrayed,  
Immersed in rapturous thought profound,  
And Melancholy, silent maid,  
With leaden eye that loves the ground,  
Still on thy solemn steps attend  
Warm Charity, the general friend,  
With Justice, to herself severe,  
And Pity, dropping soft the sadly-pleasing tear.

Oh! gently on thy suppliant's head,  
Dread goddess, lay thy chastening hand!  
Not in thy Gorgon terrors clad,  
Not circled with the vengeful band  
(As by the impious thou art seen)  
With thundering voice, and threatening mien,  
With screaming Horror's funeral cry,  
Despair, and fell Disease, and ghastly Poverty:

Thy form benign, oh goddess, wear,  
Thy milder influence impart,  
Thy philosophic train be there  
To soften, not to wound, my heart.  
The generous spark extinct revive  
Teach me to love, and to forgive,  
Exact my own defects to scan,  
What others are to feel, and know myself a Man.

## THE PROGRESS OF POESY

## L. I

Awake, *Æolian* lyre, awake,  
And give to rapture all thy trembling strings.  
From *Helicon's* harmonious springs

A thousand rills their many progress take  
The laughing flowers that round them blow  
Drink life and fragrance as they flow  
Now the rich stream of music winds along,  
Deep, majestic, smooth, and strong.  
Thro' verdant vales, and *Ceres'* golden reign  
Now rolling down the steep amain,  
Headlong impetuous, see it pour ;  
The rocks and nodding groves rebellow to the roar.

## L. 2.

Oh ! Sovereign of the willing soul,  
Parent of sweet and solemn-breathing airs,  
Enchanting shell ! the sullen *Cares*  
And frantic *Passions* hear thy soft control  
On *Thracia's* hills the Lord of War  
Has curb'd the fury of his car  
And dropt his thirsty lance at thy command.  
Perching on the sceptred hand  
Of *Jove*, thy magic lulls the feather'd king  
With ruffled plumes and flagging wing  
Quenched in dark clouds of slumber lie  
The terror of his beak, and lightnings of his eye

## L. 3.

Thee the voice, the dance, obey  
Temper'd to thy warbled lay  
O'er *Idalla's* velvet-green  
The rosy-crowned Loves are seen  
On *Cythera's* day ;

With antic Sport, and blue-eyed Pleasures,  
 Frisking light in frolic measures ,  
 Now pursuing, now retreating,  
 Now in circling troops they meet :  
 To brisk notes in cadence beating,  
 Glance their many-twinkling feet.  
 Slow melting strains their Queen's approach declare  
 Where'er she turns, the Graces homage pay  
 With arms sublime, that float upon the air,  
 In gliding state she wins her easy way  
 O'er her warm cheek and rising bosom move  
 The bloom of young Desire and purple light of Love.

## II 1

Man's feeble race what ills await !  
 Labour, and Penury, the racks of Pain,  
 Disease, and Sorrow's weeping train,  
 And Death, sad refuge from the storms of fate !  
 The fond complaint, my song, disprove,  
 And justify the laws of Jove.  
 Say, has he given in vain the heavenly Muse ?  
 Night and all her sickly dews,  
 Her spectres wan, and birds of boding cry,  
 He gives to range the dreary sky ,  
 Till down the eastern cliffs afar  
 Hyperion's march they spy, and glittering shafts of war

## II 2

In climes beyond the solar road,  
 Where shaggy forms o'er ice-built mountains roam,  
 The Muse has broke the twilight gloom  
 To cheer the shivering native's dull abode.  
 And oft, beneath the odorous shade  
 Of Chili's boundless forests laid,  
 She deigns to hear the savage youth repeat,  
 In loose numbers wildly sweet,  
 Their feather cinctured chiefs, and dusky loves.  
 Her track, where'er the goddess roves,  
 Glory pursue, and generous Shame,  
 The unconquerable Mind, and freedom's holy flame.

## II. 3.

Woods, that wave o'er Delphi's steep,  
Isles, that crown th' Ægean deep,  
Fields, that cool Ilissus laves,  
Or where Mæander's amber waves  
In lingering labyrinths creep,  
How do your tuneful echoes languish,  
Mute, but to the voice of anguish!  
Where each old poetic mountain  
Inspiration breathed around;  
Every shade and hallowed fountain  
Murmured deep a solemn sound  
Till the sad Nine, in Greece's evil hour  
Left their Parnassus for the Latian plains.  
Alike they scorn the pomp of tyrant Power,  
And coward Vice, that revels in her chains.  
When Latium had her lofty spirit lost,  
They sought, oh Albion! next thy sea-encircled coast.

## III. 1.

Far from the sun and summer gale,  
In thy green lap was Nature's Darling laid,  
What time, where lucid Avon stray'd,  
To him the mighty mother did unveil  
Her awful face the dauntless child  
Stretch'd forth his little arms and smiled.  
'This pencil take (she said) whose colours clear  
Richly paint the vernal year  
Thine too these golden keys, Immortal Boy!  
This can unlock the gates of joy!  
Of horror that, and thrilling fears,  
Or ope the sacred source of sympathetic tears.'

## III. 2.

Nor second He, that rode sublime  
Upon the seraph wings of Ecstasy,  
The secrets of the abyss to spy  
He passed the flaming bounds of place and time:

The living throne, the sapphire blaze,  
 Where angels tremble while they gaze,  
 He saw, but, blasted with excess of light,  
 Closed his eyes in endless night  
 Behold, where Dryden's less presumptuous car,  
 Wide o'er the fields of glory bear  
 Two coursers of ethereal race,  
 With necks in thunder clothed, and long resounding pace.

## III 3

Hark, his hands the lyre explore!  
 Bright-eyed Fancy, hovering o'er,  
 Scatters from her pictured urn  
 Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.  
 But ah! 'tis heard no more—

Oh lyre divine, what daring spirit  
 Wakes thee now? Tho' he inherit  
 Nor the pride, nor ample pinion,  
 That the Theban eagle bear,  
 Sailing with supreme dominion  
 Thro' the azure deep of air  
 Yet oft before his infant eyes would run  
 Such forms as glitter in the Muse's ray,  
 With orient hues, unborrowed of the sun  
 Yet shall he mount, and keep his distant way  
 Beyond the limits of a vulgar fate,  
 Beneath the Good how far—but far above the Great.

## THE BARD

## I I

'Ruin seize thee, ruthless King!  
 Confusion on thy banners wait,  
 Tho' fanned by Conquest's crimson wing,  
 They mock the air with idle state  
 Helm, nor hauberk's twisted mail,  
 Nor e'en thy virtues, Tyrant, shall avail

To save thy secret soul from nightly fears,  
From Cambria's curse, from Cambria's tears!  
Such were the sounds that o'er the crested pride  
Of the first Edward scattered wild dismay  
As down the steep of Snowdon's shaggy side  
He wound with tollsome march his long array  
Stout Gloster stood aghast in speechless trance  
'To arms! cried Mortimer and couched his quivering  
lance.

## L 2.

On a rock, whose haughty brow  
Frowns o'er cold Conway's foaming flood,  
Robed in the sable garb of woe,  
With haggard eyes the poet stood;  
(Loose his beard, and hoary hair  
Streamed, like a meteor to the troubled air)  
And with a master's hand, and prophet's fire,  
Struck the deep sorrows of his lyre.  
'Hark, how each giant-oak, and desert cave,  
Sighs to the torrent's awful voice beneath!  
O'er thee, oh King! their hundred arms they wave,  
Revenge on thee in hoarser murmurs breathe;  
Vocal no more, since Cambria's fatal day  
To high born Hoel's harp, or soft Llewellyn's lay

## L 3.

Cold is Cadwallo's tongue,  
That hushed the stormy main:  
Brave Urien sleeps upon his craggy bed  
Mountains, ye mourn in vain  
Modred, whose magic song  
Made huge Plinlimmon bow his cloud-topped head.  
On dreary Arvon's shore they lie,  
Smeared with gore, and ghastly pale  
Far far aloof th' affrighted ravens sail;  
The famished eagle screams, and passes by

Dear lost companions of my tuneful art,  
Dear as the light that visits these sad eyes,  
Dear as the ruddy drops that warm my heart,  
Ye died amidst your dying country's cries—  
No more I weep They do not sleep  
On yonder cliffs, a griesly band,  
I see them sit, they linger yet,  
Avengers of their native land  
With me in dreadful harmony they join,  
And weave with bloody hands the tissue of thy line.

## II I

'Weave the warp, and weave the woof,  
The winding sheet of Edward's race.  
Give ample room, and verge enough  
The characters of hell to trace.  
Mark the year, and mark the night,  
When Severn shall re-echo with affright  
The shrieks of death, thro' Berkley's roof that ring,  
Shrieks of an agonizing king!  
She-wolf of France, with unrelenting fangs,  
That tear'st the bowels of thy mangled mate,  
From thee be born, who o'er thy country hangs  
The scourge of heaven What terrors round him wait!  
Amazement in his van, with flight combined,  
And sorrow's faded form, and solitude behind

## II. 2.

'Mighty victor, mighty lord!  
Low on his funeral couch he lies!  
No pitying heart, no eye, afford  
A tear to grace his obsequies.  
Is the sable warrior fled?  
Thy son is gone. He rests among the dead.  
The swarm, that in thy noontide beam were born?  
Gone to salute the rising morn.

Fair laughs the morn, and soft the zephyr blows,  
While proudly riding o'er the azure realm  
In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes;  
Youth on the prow and Pleasure at the helm;  
Regardless of the sweeping whirlwinds sway  
That, hushed in grim repose, expects his evening prey

## II. 3.

'Fill high the sparkling bowl,  
The rich repast prepare,  
Reft of a crown he yet may share the feast  
Close by the regal chair  
Fell Thirst and Famine scowl  
A baleful smile upon their baffled guest.  
Heard ye the din of battle bray,  
Lance to lance, and horse to horse?  
Long years of havoc urge their destined course,  
And thro' the kindred squadrons mow their way  
Ye towers of Julius, London's lasting shame,  
With many a foul and midnight murder fed,  
Revere his consort's faith, his father's fame,  
And spare the meek usurper's holy head.  
Above, below the rose of snow,  
Twined with her blushing foe, we spread:  
The bristled boar in infant-gore  
Wallows beneath the thorny shade.  
Now brothers, bending o'er the accursed loom,  
Stamp we our vengeance deep, and ratify his doom.

## III. I.

'Edward, lo! to sudden fate  
(Weave we the woof. The thread is spun.)  
Half of thy heart we consecrate.  
(The web is wove. The work is done.)  
Stay, oh stay! nor thus forlorn  
Leave me unblessed, unpitied, here to mourn:  
In yon bright track, that fires the western skies,  
They melt, they vanish from my eyes.

But oh ! what solemn scenes on Snowdon's height  
 Descending slow their glittering skirts unroll ?  
 Visions of glory, spare my aching sight !  
 Ye unborn ages, crowd not on my soul !  
 No more our long-lost Arthur we bewail  
 All hail, ye genuine kings, Britannia's issue, hail !

## III 2

'Girt with many a baron bold  
 Sublime their starry fronts they rear ;  
 And gorgeous dames, and statesmen old  
 In bearded majesty, appear  
 In the midst a 'form divine !  
 Her eye proclaims her of the Briton-line ;  
 Her lion-port, her awe-commanding face,  
 Attempered sweet to virgin-grace.  
 What strings symphonious tremble in the air,  
 What strains of vocal transport round her play  
 Hear from the grave, great Taliessin, hear ,  
 They breathe a soul to animate thy clay  
 Bright Rapture calls, and soaring as she sings,  
 Waves in the eye of heaven her many-coloured wings.

## III 3

'The verse adorn again  
 Fierce war, and faithful love,  
 And truth severe, by fairy fiction drest.  
 In buskined measures move  
 Pale grief, and pleasing pain,  
 With horror, tyrant of the throbbing breast.  
 A voice, as of the cherub choir,  
 Gales from blooming Eden bear ,  
 And distant warblings lessen on my ear,  
 That lost in long futurity expire  
 Fond impious man, think'st thou yon sanguine cloud,  
 Raised by thy breath, has quenched the orb of day ?  
 To-morrow he repairs the golden flood,  
 And warms the nations with redoubled ray

Enough for me ; with joy I see  
The different doom our fates assign.  
Be thine despair, and sceptred care,  
To triumph, and to die, are mine.  
He spoke, and headlong from the mountain's height  
Deep in the roaring tide he plunged to endless night.

## ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD.

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day  
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,  
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way  
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.  
  
Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,  
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,  
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,  
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds  
  
Save that from yonder ivy mantled tower  
The moping owl does to the moon complain  
Of such as, wandering near her secret bower  
Molest her ancient solitary reign.  
  
Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,  
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,  
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,  
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.  
  
The breery call of incense-breathing morn,  
The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,  
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,  
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.  
  
For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,  
Or busy housewife ply her evening care  
No children run to lisp their sire's return,  
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,  
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke,  
How jocund did they drive their team afield!  
How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not ambition mock their useful toil,  
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;  
Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile  
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,  
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,  
Await alike the inevitable hour  
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,  
If memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,  
Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault  
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust  
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?  
Can honour's voice provoke the silent dust,  
Or flattery soothe the dull cold ear of death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid  
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;  
Hands, that the rod of empire might have swayed,  
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

But knowledge to their eyes her ample page  
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;  
Chill penury repressed their noble rage,  
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene  
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear  
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
And waste its sweetness on the desert air

Some village Hampden, that, with dauntless breast,  
The little tyrant of his fields withstood,  
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,  
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

The applause of listening senates to command,  
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,  
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,  
And read their history in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbade nor circumscribed alone  
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined;  
Forbade to wade thro' slaughter to a throne,  
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,  
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,  
Or heap the shrine of luxury and pride  
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,  
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;  
Along the cool sequestered vale of life  
They kept the noiseless tenour of their way

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect  
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,  
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture decked,  
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by the unlettered Muse,  
The place of fame and elegy supply:  
And many a holy text around she strews,  
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey  
This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,  
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day  
Nor cast one longing lingering look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,  
Some pious drops the closing eye requires,  
E'en from the tomb the voice of nature cries,  
E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires

For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonoured dead,  
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate,  
If chance, by lonely contemplation led,  
Some kindred spirit shall enquire thy fate,—

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,  
'Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn  
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,  
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

'There at the foot of yonder nodding beech,  
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,  
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,  
And pore upon the brook that babbles by

'Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,  
Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove;  
Now drooping, woful-wan, like one forlorn,  
Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless love.

'One morn I missed him on the customed hill,  
Along the heath, and near his favourite tree;  
Another came, nor yet beside the rill,  
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he

'The next, with dirges due in sad array  
Slow through the church-way path we saw him borne —  
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay  
Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn'

*The Epitaph.*

Here rests his head upon the lap of earth  
A youth, to fortune and to fame unknown  
Fair science frowned not on his humble birth,  
And melancholy marked him for her own.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,  
Heaven did a recompense as largely send :  
He gave to misery (all he had) a tear  
He gained from heaven (twas all he wished) a friend.  
No farther seek his merits to disclose,  
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,  
(There they alike in trembling hope repose,)  
The bosom of his Father and his God.

## SONNET ON THE DEATH OF MR. RICHARD WEST.

In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,  
And reddening Phœbus lifts his golden fire  
The birds in vain their amorous descant join  
Or cheerful fields resume their green attire  
These ears, alas! for other notes repine ;  
A different object do these eyes require  
My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine ;  
And in my breast the imperfect joys expire.  
Yet morning smiles the busy race to cheer  
And new-born pleasure brings to happier men :  
The fields to all their wonted tribute bear  
To warm their little loves the birds complain :  
I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear  
And weep the more, because I weep in vain.

## SKETCH OF HIS OWN CHARACTER.

Too poor for a bribe, and too proud to importune ;  
He had not the method of making a fortune  
Could love, and could hate, so was thought somewhat odd ;  
No very great wit, he believed in a God :  
A post or a pension he did not desire,  
But left church and state to Charles Townshend and Squire.

## IMPROMPTU, ON LORD HOLLAND'S SEAT AT KINGSGATE

Old, and abandoned by each venal friend,  
Here Holland formed the pious resolution  
To smuggle a few years, and strive to mend  
A broken character and constitution

On this congenial spot he fixed his choice,  
Earl Goodwin trembled for his neighbouring sand;  
Here sea-gulls scream, and cormorants rejoice,  
And mariners, though shipwrecked, dread to land

Here reign the blustering North and blighting East,  
No tree is heard to whisper, bird to sing,  
Yet Nature could not furnish out the feast,  
Art he invokes new horrors still to bring

Here mouldering fanes and battlements arise,  
Turrets and arches nodding to their fall,  
Unpeopled monast'ries delude our eyes,  
And mimic desolation covers all.

'Ah!' said the sighing peer, 'had Bute been true,  
Nor Mungo's, Rigby's, Bradshaw's friendship vain,  
Far better scenes than these had blest our view,  
And realized the beauties which we feign

'Purged by the sword, and purified by fire,  
Then had we seen proud London's hated walls,  
Owls would have hooted in St. Peter's choir,  
And foxes stunk and littered in St. Paul's.'

## WILLIAM WHITEHEAD

[Born at Cambridge in 1715 educated at Winchester and at Clare Hall, Cambridge. His poems were collected in 1754, and again in 1774. He became Poet Laureate in 1758, and died in 1783, in London.]

William Whitehead, who must not be confused with his clever and disreputable namesake, Paul Whitehead, the poet of the orgies of Medmenham, succeeded Cibber in the laureateship when Gray declined that doubtful honour. He was the perpetual butt of the satire of Churchill, who, as Campbell says, completely killed his poetical character. Indeed his poetry is for the most part tame and conventional enough yet here and there he emerges from the ruck of Georgian poetasters and becomes noticeable. *Variety a Tale for Married People* which is too long for quotation, is an excellent story in verse—with a moral, of course, as a *conte* should have—told in a light and flowing style not unworthy of Gay. *The Enthusiast an Ode* is here given, because of the admirable way in which it epitomises the debate—it is a perennial debate, but the eighteenth century took one side and we take the other—between Nature and Society

O bards, that call to bank and glen,  
Ye bid me go to Nature to be healed;  
And lo! a purer fount is here revealed,  
My lady-nature dwells in hearts of men;

—when the modern poet writes in this way we note him as breaking the poetical concert of our age. But the doctrine is one which the poets of Pope's century were for ever enforcing; even Cowper antithesis to Pope as he was, enforced it; and this little ode of Whitehead's is so happy a rendering of their argument that it is worthy of being rescued from the oblivion which has almost overwhelmed its author.

EDITOR.

Art thou not man, and dar'st thou find  
A bliss which leans not to mankind?

Presumptuous thought and vain!  
Each bliss unshared is unenjoyed,  
Each power is weak unless employed  
Some social good to gain

Shall light and shade, and warmth and air,  
With those exalted joys compare  
Which active virtue feels,  
When on she drags, as lawful prize,  
Contempt and indolence, and vice,  
At her triumphant wheels?

As rest to labour still succeeds,  
To man, whilst virtue's glorious deeds  
Employ his toilsome day,  
This fair variety of things  
Are merely life's refreshing springs,  
To soothe him on his way

Enthusiast go, unstring thy lyre,  
In vain thou sing'st if none admire,  
How sweet soe'er the strain  
And is not thy o'erflowing mind,  
Unless thou mixest with thy kind,  
Benevolent in vain?

Enthusiast go, try every sense,  
If not thy bliss, thy excellence,  
Thou yet hast learned to scan;  
At least thy wants, thy weakness know,  
And see them all uniting show  
That man was made for man'

## MARK AKENSIDE

[Born November 9th, 1721; studied medicine at Edinburgh and Leyden; practised as a physician at Northampton; received from his friend Jeremiah Dyson an annual allowance of £300; removed to London, 1748; appointed one of the Physicians to the Queen wrote various medical tracts and lectures; died June 23rd, 1770. *The Pleasures of Imagination* was published in January 1744; *Odes on Several Subjects*, 1745. The unfinished recast of *The Pleasures of Imagination* appeared after Akenside's death in his *Poems*, 1772.]

Reason clad in strains  
Of harmony selected minds to inspire.

These words, from one of Akenside's Odes, define his own poetry or at least what he desired it to be. He was a witness for high aims in verse; for the ideal, as some call it; for the union of imagination and reason. There was in Akenside's time much dull brutality of living much gross time-serving. He, the Newcastle butcher's son, held his head aloft when others reeled and spoke thick, he offered libations to the memory of ancient sages or patriots, and intoned hymns to Virtue and Honour And to inspire a life-long friendship, such as that of Dyson, to whom he owed his well-being his leisure and his ease of mind, implies the presence in his character of some solid worth, some genuine elevation. His verse is in keeping with his life. Much verse was manufactured in his day on trivial occasions of passing interest some of this was the more piquant for its zest of indecency Much metrical satire was written it was not long since the *Dunciad* had stung the dullards not to death but to more zealous moods of dulness, and soon Churchill was to show how in rougher style to belabour antagonists with the knotty cudgel. Akenside wrote odes which may be called occasional, but he always contrived to add dignity to his poem by giving it something of a general character. If ever he became a satirist, it was in the solemn manner of one devoted before all else to principles. It was his choice to be at once poet and

philosophic teacher, or, as he would perhaps have liked to be called, *poet* and sage. In the preceding age poetry and philosophy had stood apart, Dryden aimed at pleasure, Locke at truth. But now under happy Hanoverian freedom, poetry might dare to expatiate over all the great affairs of the world and of human life, it might approach philosophy and embrace it, and from such an union surely the highest offspring of the spirit of man must arise. Nor, Akenside would say, was philosophy now the tentative and uninspiring research of the *Essay on Human Understanding*. Locke's pupil Shaftesbury, a man of aspiring moral temper and elegant culture, who had drunk deep at the well-heads of truth in ancient Greece, was the newer master, both in politics and philosophy the Gothic darkness and tyranny had disappeared. A happier period had dawned of liberty and light, of Plato and the *Characteristics*, of enthusiasm and taste, of the True, the Beautiful, and the Good.

Honour is due to Akenside for his homage to the mind and to things of the mind. And it would be unjust to say that his enthusiasm was not sincere. Since, however, he lived as poet so much among ideas, since apart from these ideas his poetry ceases to exist, one cannot but ask, Were his ideas true? Were they the best ideas? Do they still survive? And again, Did Akenside present his ideas in the best way, in a way at once philosophical and poetic? Did he indeed effect the union of reason and imagination?

It must be answered that Akenside's theory as a whole will not bear investigation, that some of his ideas are commonplace, some fantastic. His psychology is that of Addison's essays on the Imagination, his morals and metaphysics are those of Shaftesbury. Akenside was inferior to Addison, not perhaps in power of analysis, but in delicacy of perception, in pliancy of feeling, in good sense. He was inferior to Shaftesbury in the quality of his moral enthusiasm. Shaftesbury's fine illumination comes to us reflected from a surface somewhat hard and cold, it is enthusiasm still, but it is enthusiasm which cannot subsist without rhetoric. For Akenside's moral elevation was self-conscious, a dignity of attitude assumed deliberately, a constructed elevation. His manner, we are told, was stiff and pompous, he was too oracular, and took a jest very ill. He was deficient on the side of common human sympathy, he lacked geniality. He felt himself to be a 'superior person,' and he was so in fact, but he had the kind of superior fatuousness that such persons are readily betrayed into. His tone is too high-

pitched his ideas are too much in the air they do not nourish themselves in the common heart, in the common life of man. Still Akenside really lifts up his head and tries to breathe empyreal gales. And if the doctrines of amiable deism, the optimist's view of life, final causes, the unity of goodness, truth and beauty hardly seem to us to solve the riddles of the world, such solutions had certainly an attraction for some of the finest minds of the first half of the eighteenth century.

'The author's aim, Akenside says in introducing his chief poem, was not so much to give formal precepts, or enter into the way of direct argumentation, as, by exhibiting the most engaging prospects of nature, to enlarge and harmonise the imagination. A noble aim—but Akenside's theory and his descriptions somehow do not help each other as they ought. It is possible to set forth abstract truth with so much clearness and such exquisiteness of form, that its light may charm the eye as various colour charms. Truth again, in a mind like Plato's, may incarnate itself in a myth of the imagination, involuntarily and almost inevitably. Then the body and the soul of truth are indeed one living breathing organism. But Akenside sets forth his truth in a series of illustrations: the doctrine is a peg on which he hangs a picture, and after you have admired, he comes forward to tell you that the picture is less interesting than the peg. The kind of truth which Akenside presents almost invites the expositor to a frigid style. A theory of beauty and not beauty itself, save as an illustration phrases about the sublime, a definition of moral loveliness—it were easier to write poetically about sines and cosines. No treatise on the Attributes has ever won a lover for God.

Akenside's verse has been described as laborious. In reality it swims on only too gallantly. Its periods are rhetorical, like those of a lecturer with full command of his subject and conscious of superiority to his hearers. He does not brood, or meditate, or enquire—he expounds. Hence his frequent interrogative, his address to the reader his lo! and his behold! It is not verse which delays, or coils upon itself like a stream in some rocky chalice when happy and loving most its own beauty. Akenside's verse is the verse of rhetorical exposition.

His odes have been rated below their true worth. They are not lyrics in the sense that Shelley's *Skylark* is lyrical—they are not melodious cries. But they have dignity of sentiment, and that not feigned; they present lofty thoughts in language of animated

seriousness and in well-measured verse. The *Hymn to the Naiads* has delighted so many cultured readers that the high rank generally assigned to it among Akenside's poems must be maintained, but it has the faults of its author's longer work. Nothing that he has written is in style so pure and strong as the *Inscriptions*. Their narrow limits did not give time for the rise of rhetorical excitement. They have, as is fitting, a marmoreal purity and permanence.

The recast of *The Pleasures of Imagination* does not gain on the original poem. Fine audacities of expression are struck away, the philosophical analysis becomes more minute and laboured. And if we are spared the incredible allegory of Euphrosyne and Nemesis, and the dreary sprightliness of the theory of ridicule, there are added passages which make amends to the injured Goddess of Dulness.

EDWARD DOWDEN

## FROM 'THE PLEASURES OF IMAGINATION.

Say why was man so eminently rais'd  
Amid the vast creation? why ordained  
Through life and death to dart his piercing eye,  
With thoughts beyond the limits of his frame,  
But that the Omnipotent might send him forth,  
In sight of mortal and immortal powers  
As on a boundless theatre, to run  
The great career of justice; to exalt  
His generous aim to all diviner deeds;  
To chase each partial purpose from his breast;  
And through the mists of passion and of sense,  
And through the tossing tide of chance and pain,  
To hold his course unfaltering, while the voice  
Of Truth and Virtue, up the steep ascent  
Of Nature, calls him to his high reward,—  
The applauding smile of Heaven? Else wherefore burns  
In mortal bosoms this unquenched hope  
That breathes from day to day sublimer things,  
And mocks possession? wherefore darts the mind  
With such resistless ardour to embrace  
Majestic forms, impatient to be free;  
Spurning the gross control of wilful might;  
Proud of the strong contention of her toils;  
Proud to be daring? Who but rather turns  
To heaven's broad fire his unconstrained view  
Than to the glimmering of a waxen flame?  
Who that from Alpine heights his labouring eye  
Shoots round the wide horizon, to survey  
Nilus or Ganges rolling his bright wave  
Through mountains, plains, through empires black with shade,  
And continents of sand, will turn his gaze  
To mark the windings of a scanty rill  
That murmurs at his feet? The high-born soul  
Disdains to rest her heaven-aspiring wing

Beneath its native quarry Tired of earth,  
And this diurnal scene, she springs aloft  
Through fields of air , pursues the flying storm ;  
Rides on the vollied lightning through the heavens ,  
Or, yoked with whirlwinds and the northern blast,  
Sweeps the long track of day Then high she soars  
The blue profound, and hovering round the sun,  
Beholds him pouring the redundant stream  
Of light, beholds his unrelenting sway  
Bend the reluctant planets to absolve  
The fated rounds of time. Thence, far effused  
She darts her swiftness up the long career  
Of devious comets, through its burning signs,  
Exulting, measures the perennial wheel  
Of Nature, and looks back on all the stars,  
Whose blended light as with a milky zone  
Invests the orient Now amazed she views  
The empyreal waste, where happy spirits hold,  
Beyond this concave heaven, their calm abode ,  
And fields of radiance, whose unfading light  
Has travelled the profound six thousand years,  
Nor yet arrives in sight of mortal things  
Even on the barriers of the world untired  
She meditates the eternal depth below ,  
Till, half recoiling, down the headlong steep  
She plunges , soon o'erwhelmed and swallowed up  
In that immense of being There her hopes  
Rest at the fated goal For, from the birth  
Of mortal man, the sovran Maker said,  
That not in humble nor in brief delight,  
Not in the fading echoes of renown,  
Power's purple robes, nor Pleasure's flowery lap,  
The soul should find enjoyment , but, from these  
Turning disdainful to an equal good,  
Through all the ascent of things enlarge her view,  
Till every bound at length should disappear,  
And infinite perfection close the scene.

ON THE WINTER SOLSTICE, 1740.

L

The radiant ruler of the year  
At length his wintry goal attains  
Soon to reverse the long career  
And northward bend his steady reins.  
Now piercing half Potosi's height,  
Prone rush the fiery floods of light,  
Ripening the mountain's silver stores,  
While in some cavern's horrid shade,  
The panting Indian hides his head,  
And oft the approach of eve implores.

II.

But lo, on this deserted coast  
How pale the sun! how thick the air!  
Mustering his storms, a sordid host,  
Lo, Winter desolates the year  
The fields resign their latest bloom;  
No more the breezes waft perfume,  
No more the streams in music roll:  
But snows fall dark or rains resound;  
And, while great Nature mourns around,  
Her griefs infect the human soul

III.

Hence the loud city's busy throngs  
Urge the warm bowl and splendid fire;  
Harmonious dances, festive songs,  
Against the spiteful heaven conspire.  
Meantime, perhaps with tender fears,  
Some village-dame the curfew hears,  
While round the hearth her children play:  
At morn their father went abroad  
The moon is sunk, and deep the road;  
She sighs, and wonders at his stay

## IV

But thou, my lyre, awake, arise,  
And hail the sun's returning force ,  
Even now he climbs the northern skies,  
And health and hope attend his course.  
Then louder hawl the aerial waste,  
Be earth with keener cold embraced,  
Yet gentle hours advance their wing ,  
And Fancy, mocking Winter's might,  
With flowers, and dews, and streaming light,  
Already decks the new-born spring

## V

O fountain of the golden day !  
Could mortal vows promote thy speed,  
How soon before thy vernal ray  
Should each unkindly damp recede !  
How soon each hovering tempest fly,  
Whose stores for mischief arm the sky,  
Prompt on our heads to burst amain ,  
To rend the forest from the steep,  
Or, thundering o'er the Baltic deep,  
To whelm the merchant's hopes of gain !

## VI

But let not man's unequal views  
Presume o'er Nature and her laws ,  
'Tis his with grateful joy to use  
The indulgence of the sovran Cause ,  
Secure that health and beauty springs  
Through this majestic frame of things,  
Beyond what he can reach to know,  
And that Heaven's all-subduing will,  
With good, the progeny of ill,  
Attempereth every state below.

## VII

How pleasing wears the wintry night,  
Spent with the old illustrious dead !  
While by the taper's trembling light  
I seem those awful scenes to tread

Where chiefs or legislators lie,  
Whose triumphs move before my eye,  
In arms and antique pomp arrayed ;  
While now I taste the Ionian song  
Now bend to Plato's godlike tongue  
Resounding through the olive shade.

## VIII.

But should some cheerful, equal friend,  
Bid leave the studious page a while,  
Let mirth on wisdom then attend,  
And social ease on learned toil ;  
Then while, at love's uncared-for shrine,  
Each dictates to the god of wine  
Her name whom all his hopes obey  
What flattering dreams each bosom warm,  
While absence, heightening every charm,  
Invokes the slow returning May !

## IX.

May thou delight of heaven and earth,  
When will thy genial star arise ?  
The auspicious morn, which gives thee birth,  
Shall bring Eudora to my eyes.  
Within her sylvan haunt behold,  
As in the happy garden old,  
She moves like that primeval fair  
Thither ye silver-sounding lyres,  
Ye tender smiles, ye chaste desires,  
Fond hope and mutual faith, repair.

## X.

And if believing love can read  
His better omens in her eye,  
Then shall my fears, O charming maid,  
And every pain of absence die  
Then shall my jocund harp, attuned  
To thy true ear with sweeter sound

Pursue the free Horatian song ,  
Old Tyne shall listen to my tale,  
And echo down the bordering vale,  
The liquid melody prolong

FOR A GROTTO

To me, whom in their lays the shepherds call  
Actæa, daughter of the neighbouring stream,  
This cave belongs    The fig-tree and the vine,  
Which o'er the rocky entrance downward shoot,  
Were placed by Glycon    He with cowslips pale,  
Primrose and purple lychnis, decked the green  
Before my threshold, and my shelving walls  
With honeysuckle covered.    Here, at noon,  
Lulled by the murmur of my rising fount,  
I slumber    here my clustering fruits I tend,  
Or from the humid flowers at break of day  
Fresh garlands weave, and chase from all my bounds  
Each thing impure or noxious    Enter in,  
O Stranger, undismayed.    Nor bat nor toad  
Here lurks , and, if thy breast of blameless thoughts  
Approve thee, not unwelcome shalt thou tread  
My quiet mansion    chiefly if thy name  
Wise Pallas and the immortal Muses own.

## CHRISTOPHER SMART

[CHRISTOPHER SMART was born at Shipbourne in Kent on April 11 1722. He was educated at Durham School and at Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, becoming a Fellow in 1745. In 1753 he married and came to live in London, where his careless habits soon brought him into grave difficulties. He was for some time out of his mind, and it was during his confinement, in an interval of sanity that the *Song to David* was written. In 1770 he closed a life in which he had known all forms of disappointment and unhappiness. His poems were first collected in 1753, and a posthumous edition in two volumes was published in 1791. The *Song to David* appeared in a separate quarto in 1763, and was republished in 1819 by the Rev R. Harvey.]

The posthumous Editor of Smart's poems makes an apology for the entire exclusion of the *Song to David* and some other pieces on the ground that they were written after the author's confinement, and bear for the most part melancholy proofs of the recent estrangement of his mind. Such poems however he adds, have been selected from his pamphlets and inserted in the present work as were likely to be acceptable to the reader. The volumes so introduced contain a curious assemblage of quite worthless verses; Scatolian prize-poems, epigrams, birthday addresses, imitations of Pope and Gay and all else that might be expected from a facile and uninspired versifier of that date. Two generations ago Smart's name was familiar to schoolboys from his translation of Horace into prose; a work about as worthy of immortality as were his imitative verses. It is only in our own day that attention has been recalled to the single poem by which he deserves to be not only remembered, but remembered as a poet who for one short moment reached a height to which the prosaic muse of his epoch was wholly unaccustomed. There is nothing like the *Song to David* in the eighteenth century there is nothing out of which it might seem

to have been developed. It is true that with great appearance of symmetry it is ill-arranged and out of proportion, its hundred stanzas weary the reader with their repetitions and with their epithets piled up on a too obvious system. But in spite of this touch of pedantry, it is the work of a poet, of a man so possessed with the beauty and fervour of the Psalms and with the high romance of the psalmist's life that in the days of his madness the character of David has become a 'fixed idea' with him, to be embodied in words and dressed in the magic robe of verse when the dark hour has gone by. There are few episodes in our literary history more interesting than this of the wretched bookseller's hack, with his mind thrown off its balance by drink and poverty, rising at the instant of his deepest distress to a pitch of poetic performance unimagined by himself at all other times, unimagined by all but one or two of his contemporaries, and so little appreciated by the public that when an edition of his writings was called for it was sent into the world with this masterpiece omitted.

EDITOR.

## A SONG TO DAVID.

O Thou that sit'st upon a throne,  
With harp of high majestic tone,  
To praise the King of kings ;  
And voice of heaven-ascending swell,  
Which, while its deeper notes excel,  
Clear as a clarion rings :

To bless each valley grove and coast  
And charm the cherubs to the post  
Of gratitude in throngs  
To keep the days on Zion's mount,  
And send the year to his account  
With dances and with songs

O servant of God's holiest charge,  
The minister of praise at large,  
Which thou may'st now receive ;  
From thy blest mansion hail and hear  
From topmost eminence appear  
To this the wreath I weave.

Great, vallant, plous, good, and clean,  
Sublime, contemplative, serene,  
Strong constant, pleasant, wise !  
Bright effluence of exceeding grace  
Best man !—the swiftness and the race,  
The peril, and the prize !

Great—from the lustre of his crown,  
From Samuel's horn and God's renown,  
Which is the people's voice ;  
For all the host, from rear to van,  
Applauded and embraced the man—  
The man of God's own choice.

Valiant—the word and up he rose—  
The fight—he triumphed o'er his foes,  
Whom God's just laws abhor ,  
And armed in gallant faith he took  
Against the boaster, from the brook,  
The weapons of the war

Pious—magnificent and grand ,  
'Twas he the famous temple planned  
(The seraph in his soul) ,  
Foremost to give his Lord his dues,  
Foremost to bless the welcome news,  
And foremost to condole.

Good—from Jehudah's genuine vein,  
From God's best nature good in grain,  
His aspect and his heart ,  
To pity, to forgive, to save ,  
Witness Engedi's conscious cave,  
And Shimei's blunted dart

Clean—if perpetual prayer be pure,  
And love, which could itself inure  
To fasting and to fear—  
Clean in his gestures, hands, and feet,  
To smite the lyre, the dance complete,  
To play the sword and spear

Sublime—invention ever young,  
Of vast conception, towering tongue  
To God th' eternal theme ,  
Notes from yon exaltations caught,  
Unrivalled royalty of thought  
O'er meaner strains supreme.

Contemplative—on God to fix  
His musings, and above the six  
The sabbath-day he blest ,  
'Twas then his thoughts self-conquest pruned,  
And heavenly melancholy tuned,  
To bless and bear the rest.

Serene—to sow the seeds of peace,  
Remembering when he watched the fleece.

How sweetly Kidron purred—  
To further knowledge, allence vice,  
And plant perpetual paradise  
When God had calmed the world.

Strong—in the Lord, who could defy  
Satan, and all his powers that lie  
In sempiternal night;  
And hell, and horror and despair  
Were as the lion and the bear  
To his undaunted might.

Constant—in love to God the truth,  
Age, manhood, infancy and youth—  
To Jonathan his friend  
Constant, beyond the verge of death,  
And Ziba and Mephibosheth  
His endless fame attend.

Pleasant—and various as the year  
Man, soul, and angel, without peer,  
Priest, champion, sage, and boy;  
In armour or in ephod clad,  
His pomp, his piety was glad;  
Majestic was his joy

Wise—in recovery from his fall,  
Whence rose his eminence o'er all,  
Of all the most reviled;  
The light of Israel in his ways,  
Wise are his precepts, prayer and praise  
And counsel to his child.

His muse, bright angel of his verse,  
Gives balm for all the thorns that please,  
For all the pangs that rage;  
Blest light, still gaining on the gloom,  
The more than Michal of his bloom,  
Th' Abishag of his age.

He sung of God—the mighty source  
Of all things—the stupendous force  
On which all strength depends ,  
From whose right arm, beneath whose eyes,  
All period, power and enterprise  
Commences, reigns, and ends.

Angels—their ministry and meed,  
Which to and fro with blessings speed,  
Or with their citterns wait ,  
Where Michael with his millions bows,  
Where dwells the seraph and his spouse,  
The cherub and her mate

Of man—the semblance and effect  
Of God and Love—the Saint elect  
For infinite applause—  
To rule the land, and briny broad,  
To be laborious in his laud,  
And heroes in his cause

The world—the clustering spheres He made,  
The glorious light, the soothing shade,  
Dale, champaign, grove and hill ,  
The multitudinous abyss,  
Where secrecy remains in bliss,  
And wisdom hides her skill.

Trees, plants, and flowers—of virtuous root ;  
Gem yielding blossom, yielding fruit,  
Choice gums and precious balm ,  
Bless ye the nosegay in the vale,  
And with the sweetness of the gale  
Enrich the thankful psalm

Of fowl—e'en every beak and wing  
Which cheer the winter, hail the spring,  
That live in peace or prey ,  
They that make music, or that mock,  
The quail, the brave domestic cock,  
The raven, swan, and jay

Of fishes—every size and shape  
Which nature frames of light escape,  
Devouring man to shun  
The shells are in the wealthy deep,  
The shoals upon the surface leap,  
And love the glancing sun.

Of beasts—the beaver plods his task,  
While the sleek tigers roll and bask,  
Nor yet the shades arouse  
Her cave the mining coney scoops;  
Where o'er the mead the mountain stoops  
The kids exult and browse.

Of gems—their virtue and their price,  
Which hid in earth from man's device,  
Their darts of lustre breathe  
The jasper of the master's stamp,  
The topaz blazing like a lamp  
Among the mines beneath.

•

•

O David, highest on the list  
Of worthies, on God's ways insist,  
The genuine word repeat:  
Vain are the documents of men,  
And vain the flourish of the pen  
That keeps the fool's conceit.

Praise above all—for praise prevails  
Heap up the measure, load the scales,  
And good to goodness add  
The generous soul her favour aids,  
But peevish obloquy degrades  
The Lord is great and glad.

For adoration all the ranks  
Of angels yield eternal thanks,  
And David in the midst ,  
With God's good poor, which, last and least  
In man's esteem, thou to thy feast,  
O blessed bridegroom, bidst.

For adoration seasons change,  
And order, truth, and beauty range,  
Adjust, attract, and fill  
The grass the polyanthus checks ,  
And polished porphyry reflects,  
By the descending rill.

Rich almonds colour to the prime  
For adoration , tendrils climb,  
And fruit-trees pledge their gems ,  
And Ivis<sup>1</sup> with her gorgeous vest  
Builds for her eggs her cunning nest,  
And bell-flowers bow their stems

\* \* \* \* \*

Sweet is the dew that falls betimes,  
And drops upon the leafy limes ,  
Sweet Hermon's fragrant air  
Sweet is the lily's silver bell,  
And sweet the wakeful tapers smell  
That watch for early prayer

Sweet the young nurse with love intense,  
Which smiles o'er sleeping innocence ,  
Sweet when the lost arrive  
Sweet the musician's ardour beats,  
While his vague mind's in quest of sweets,  
The choicest flowers to hive.

<sup>1</sup> The humming bird.

Sweeter in all the strains of love  
The language of thy turtle dove  
    Paired to thy swelling chord  
Sweeter with every grace endued  
The glory of thy gratitude  
    Respired unto the Lord.

Strong is the horse upon his speed;  
Strong in pursuit the rapid glede,  
    Which makes at once his game  
Strong the tall ostrich on the ground;  
Strong thro' the turbulent profound  
    Shoots xiphias<sup>1</sup> to his aim.

Strong is the lion—like a coal  
His eyeball—like a bastion's mole  
    His chest against the foe;  
Strong, the gier-eagle on his sail,  
Strong against tide th enormous whale  
    Emerges as he goes.

But stronger still, in earth and air  
And in the sea, the man of prayer;  
    And far beneath the tide;  
And in the seat to faith assigned,  
Where ask is have, where seek is find,  
    Where knock is open wide.

Beauteous the fleet before the gale;  
Beauteous the multitudes in mail,  
    Ranked arms and crested heads:  
Beauteous the garden's umbrage mild,  
Walk, water meditated wild,  
    And all the bloomy beds.

<sup>1</sup> The kite.

The sword-fish.

Beauteous the moon full on the lawn ,  
And beauteous, when the veil's withdrawn,  
The virgin to her spouse  
Beauteous the temple decked and filled,  
When to the heaven of heavens they build  
Their heart-directed vows

Beauteous, yea beauteous more than these,  
The shepherd-king upon his knees  
For his momentous trust ,  
With wish of infinite conceit,  
For man, beast, mute, the small and great,  
And prostrate dust to dust.

Precious the bounteous widow's mite ;  
And precious, for extreme delight,  
The largess from the churl  
Precious the ruby's blushing blaze,  
And alba's<sup>1</sup> blest imperial rays,  
And pure cerulean pearl.

Precious the penitential tear ,  
And precious is the sigh sincere,  
Acceptable to God  
And precious are the winning flowers,  
In gladsome Israel's feast of bowers,  
Bound on the hallowed sod.

More precious that diviner part  
Of David, even the Lord's own heart,  
Great, beautiful, and new ,  
In all things where it was intent,  
In all extremes, in each event  
Proof—answering true to true.

<sup>1</sup> Rev xxi 11 (?)

Glorious the sun in mid career ;  
Glorious th assembled fires appear ;  
Glorious the comet's train  
Glorious the trumpet and alarm  
Glorious th almighty stretched-out arm ;  
Glorious th enraptured main

Glorious the northern lights astream ;  
Glorious the song when God's the theme ;  
Glorious the thunder's roar  
Glorious hosanna from the den ;  
Glorious the catholic amen ;  
Glorious the martyr's gore :

Glorious—more glorious is the crown  
Of Him that brought salvation down,  
By meekness call'd thy Son  
Thou at<sup>1</sup> stupendous truth believed,  
And now the matchless deed's achieved.  
Determined, dared, and done.

Or that (?).

## WILLIAM FALCONER.

[BORN 11th of February, 1732, lost with the crew of the *Aurora*, last heard of on 27th December, 1769, at the Cape of Good Hope *The Shipwreck* was published in 1762]

In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for December, 1755, appeared a versified complaint, *On the Uncommon Scarcity of Poetry*, by a Sailor. The scarcity still prevailed when seven years later a sailor—the same perhaps who had written the complaint—startled English readers by his discovery of a new epic theme. The Muse, as Falconer imagines her, visits him in no olive-grove, or flowery lawn, but in a glimmering cavern beside the sea, his lyre is tuned to

‘The long surge that foams through yonder cave,  
Whose vaults remurmur to the roaring wave’

There was largeness, and freedom and force in the subject he had chosen, and what is best in his treatment of it was learnt direct from the waves and winds. No one before Falconer had conceived or told in English poetry the long and passionate combat between the sea, roused to fury, and its slight but dexterous rival, with the varying fortunes of the strife. He had himself, like his Arion, been wrecked near Cape Colonna, on the coast of Greece, like Arion, he was one of three who reached the shore and lived. For the material of his brief epic he needed but to revive in his imagination the sights, the sounds, the fears, the hopes, the efforts of five days the most eventful and the most vivid of his life. *The Shipwreck* is not a descriptive poem, it is a poem of action, each buffet of the sea, each swift turning of the wheel is a portion of the attack or the defence, and as the catastrophe draws near, as the ship scuds past Falconer, as the hills of Greece

rise to view as the pitiless cliffs of St. George grow clear and the sound of the breakers is heard, the action of the poem increases in swiftness and intensity.

Falconer was a skilful seaman; unhappily he was not a great poet. The reality, the unity the largeness of his theme lend him support and he is a faithful and energetic narrator. But the spirits of tempest and of night needed for their interpreter one of stronger and subtler speech than Falconer. Nor was it possible to render into orderly couplets after Pope the vast cadences, the difficult phrases of ocean. The poet's diction is the artificial diction of eighteenth-century verse, handled with none of that exquisite art shown by some cultured writers of the time. And into the midst of the commonplace poetic vocabulary bounces suddenly a rattling row of nautical terms suitable only for the *Marine Dictionary*. Phœbus and Clio must lend a hand to brail up the mizen, or belay the topping-lift.

The persons—Albert prudent and bold, the rough Rodmond, the tender Arlon—are drawn in simple outlines. Some part of the love-story of Palemon, says Campbell, is rather 'swainish.' But Falconer's love-sentiment is as genuine as any other part of the feeling of his poem; and a sailor writing on gentle themes becomes perhaps naturally a swain. The seal of fidelity was set upon Falconer's sea-poem by death—an unknown death in some unknown sea.

EDWARD DOWDEN

## FROM 'THE SHIPWRECK,' CANTO III

In vain the cords and axes were prepared,  
For every wave now smites the quivering yard,  
High o'er the ship they throw a dreadful shade,  
Then on her burst in terrible cascade,  
Across the foundered deck o'erwhelming roar,  
And foaming, swelling, bound upon the shore.  
Swift up the mountain billow now she flies,  
Her shattered top half buried in the skies,  
Borne o'er a latent reef the hull impends,  
Then thundering on the marble crag descends  
Her ponderous bulk the dire concussion feels,  
And o'er upheaving surges wounded reels—  
Again she plunges! hark! a second shock  
Bilges the splitting vessel on the rock—  
Down on the vale of death, with dismal cries,  
The fated victims shuddering cast their eyes  
In wild despair, while yet another stroke  
With strong convulsion rends the solid oak  
Ah Heaven!—behold her crashing ribs divide  
She loosens, parts, and spreads in ruin o'er the tide.

Oh, were it mine with sacred Maro's art  
To wake to sympathy the feeling heart,  
Like him, the smooth and mournful verse to dress  
In all the pomp of exquisite distress,  
Then, too severely taught by cruel fate,  
To share in all the perils I relate,  
Then might I with unrivalled strains deplore  
The impervious horrors of a leeward shore.

As o'er the surf the bending main-mast hung,  
Still on the rigging thirty seamen clung  
Some on a broken crag were struggling cast,  
And there by oozy tangles grappled fast,

Awhile they bore the o'erwhelming billows rage,  
Unequal combat with their fate to wage;  
Till all benumbed, and feeble, they forego  
Their slippery hold and sink to shades below  
Some, from the main yard arm impetuous thrown  
On marble ridges, die without a groan  
Three with Palemon on their skill depend,  
And from the wreck on oars and rafts descend;  
Now on the mountain wave on high they ride,  
Then downward plunge beneath the involving tide;  
Till one, who seems in agony to strive,  
The whirling breakers heave on shore alive  
The rest a speedier end of anguish knew  
And pressed the stony beach—a lifeless crew!

Next, O unhappy chief! the eternal doom  
Of Heaven decreed thee to the briny tomb:  
What scenes of misery torment thy view!  
What painful struggles of thy dying crew!  
Thy perished hopes all buried in the flood  
Overspread with corpses! red with human blood!  
So pierced with anguish hoary Priam gazed,  
When Troy's imperial domes in ruin blazed;  
While he, severest sorrow doomed to feel,  
Expired beneath the victor's murdering steel—  
Thus with his helpless partners to the last,  
Sad refuge! Albert grasps the floating mast.  
His soul could yet sustain this mortal blow  
But droops, alas! beneath superior woe;  
For now strong nature's sympathetic chain  
Tugs at his yearning heart with powerful strain;  
His faithful wife, for ever doomed to mourn  
For him, alas! who never shall return  
To black adversity's approach exposed,  
With want, and hardships unforeseen, enclosed  
His lovely daughter left without a friend  
Her innocence to succour and defend,  
By youth and indigence set forth a prey  
To lawless guilt, that flatters to betray—

While these reflections rack his feeling mind,  
Rodmond, who hung beside, his grasp resigned,  
And, as the tumbling waters o'er him rolled,  
His outstretched arms the master's legs enfold  
Sad Albert feels their dissolution near,  
And strives in vain his fettered limbs to clear,  
For death bids every clenching joint adhere  
All faint, to Heaven he throws his dying eyes,  
And, 'Oh protect my wife and child!' he cries—  
The gushing streams roll back the unfinished sound,  
He gasps! and sinks amid the vast profound

Five only left of all the shipwrecked throng  
Yet ride the mast which shoreward drives along;  
With these Arion still his hold secures,  
And all assaults of hostile waves endures  
O'er the dire prospect as for life he strives,  
He looks if poor Palemon yet survives—  
'Ah wherefore, trusting to unequal art,  
Didst thou, incautious! from the wreck depart'  
Alas! these rocks all human skill defy,  
Who strikes them once, beyond relief must die  
And now sore wounded, thou perhaps art tost  
On these, or in some oozy cavern lost'  
Thus thought Arion, anxious gazing round  
In vain, his eyes no more Palemon found—  
The demons of destruction hover nigh,  
And thick their mortal shafts commissioned fly  
When now a breaking surge, with forceful sway,  
Two, next Arion, furious tears away,  
Hurled on the crags, behold they gasp, they bleed!  
And groaning, cling upon the elusive weed,  
Another billow bursts in boundless roar!  
Arion sinks! and memory views no more.

Ha! total night and horror here preside,  
My stunned ear tingles to the whizzing tide;  
It is their funeral knell! and gliding near  
Methinks the phantoms of the dead appear!

But lo! emerging from the watery grave  
Again they float incumbent on the wave,

Again the dismal prospect opens round,—  
The wreck, the shore, the dying and the drowned !  
And see ! enfeebled by repeated shocks,  
Those two, who scramble on the adjacent rocks,  
Their faithless hold no longer can retain  
They sink o'erwhelmed ! and never rise again.

Two with Arion yet the mast upbore,  
That now above the ridges reached the shore  
Still trembling to descend, they downward gaze  
With horror pale, and torpid with amaze  
The floods recoil ! the ground appears below !  
And life's faint embers now rekindling glow  
Awhile they wait the exhausted waves' retreat,  
Then climb slow up the beach with hands and feet—  
O Heaven ! delivered by whose sovereign hand  
Still on destruction's brink they shuddering stand,  
Receive the languid incense they bestow  
That, damp with death, appears not yet to glow  
To Thee each soul the warm oblation pays  
With trembling ardour of unequal praise ;  
In every heart dismay with wonder strives,  
And hope the sickened spark of life revives,  
Her magic powers their exiled health restore,  
Till horror and despair are felt no more.

## OLIVER GOLDSMITH

[BORN at Pallis, county of Longford, Ireland, on the 10th of November 1728, died in his chambers in Brick Court London on the 4th of April, 1774 *The Traveller* was published in December 1764, *The Deserted Village*, May 1770 The ballad *The Hermit* first appeared in *The Vicar of Wakefield*, 1776 *The Haunch of Venison*, written about 1771 was first published after its author's death, 1776, *Retaliation*, Goldsmith's last work, was also of posthumous publication, 1774 ]

The poems of Goldsmith make but a small fragment of his work, they are, however, more finely wrought and of a costlier material than the rest. 'I cannot afford to court the draggle-tail Muses,' he said, 'they would let me starve' And so he turned to the book-sellers' task-work, bestowing on that task-work a grace which was all his own, and, the drudgery ended, he took his wages and was light of heart But poetry belonged to his higher self, to his affections, to his imagination Goldsmith could not have written *The Deserted Village* to the order of Griffiths or Newbery, and it is told—nor is the story incredible—that he went back with the note for one hundred pounds in his pocket, and insisted that his publisher should not ruin himself by paying 'five shillings a couplet.' The rustic maid Poetry whom he loved was not quite penniless, still Goldsmith felt that the attachment was imprudent, and she was none the less dear to his foolish heart on that account

'Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried,  
My shame in crowds, my solitary pride,  
Thou source of all my bliss and all my woe,  
That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so'

His poems won for Goldsmith friendships and fame, yet he felt truly that his was not a poetic age. The keenest intellects and the most powerful imaginations of the time found their proper utterance in prose. The high tragedy of that period is *Clarissa*, the broadest and brightest study of the *comédie humaine* is *Tom Jones* Johnson in his essays had dignified the minor morals of Addison, and breathed into them the spirit of a courageous melancholy Burke by breadth of vision and largeness of character was

transforming the political pamphlet from a thing of party to a thing for mankind. Hume had shown how the facts of history may be artfully disposed, and their ragged edges smoothed away until a graceful narrative emerges from the confusion. Gibbon was already projecting the lines of his Roman road through the centuries. It was the age of prose. The poets themselves had turned critics, making but timid experiments in verse—the more exquisite their culture the less was their poetic courage. One or two indeed might appear more robust, but by a well instructed eye their force was seen to be but turbulence. As for the rest they handed their verses around in manuscript—then perhaps contributed them to a poetical miscellany; finally collected them in a tiny volume, or a quarto pamphlet of ample margin.

Goldsmith, whose genius slumbered late was in no hurry to be a poet and he looked carefully to make sure of himself and of his way. With a happy instinct he discerned his own gift, and it was his virtue, amid all his wanderings and with all his seeming recklessness, to be faithful to that gift. Should he apply his humour to base uses and follow in the steps of Churchill? Goldsmith affected no airs of dignity in what he wrote, and did not fear that word of reproach in his day *low*—but his gentle heart, his kindly wisdom, made it impossible for him to follow Churchill. He did not covet the reputation of a literary bully—his was no loud contentious voice; if he hated anything, he hated the rage of party spirit. But might he not accept Gray as a master? Goldsmith has left on record his estimate of Gray and the words express a qualified enthusiasm, a certain official admiration as critic. But in truth, to please him poetry should address the heart, and he felt cold towards the fastidious flights of *The Bard* and *The Progress of Poetry*. He ventured to hint to Gray the advice that Isocrates used to give his scholars, *study the people*. Pindar had been popular—Pan himself was seen dancing to his melody. The seeming obscurity the sudden transitions, the hazardous epithet of that mighty master had been caught by Gray; the directness, the life, the native energy of classical poetry he had not discovered. And Gray's imitators, what did they produce but tawdry things in writing which the poet sits down without any plan, and heaps up splendid images without any selection? Last, there was the didactic essay or epistle in verse. Should Goldsmith become the successor of Akenside? Goldsmith highly esteemed the didactic poem; he looked on it as characteristic of England.

But, at least, let it be written in our old rhymed couplet, not in pedantic blank-verse, and as for the pompous epithet, the licentious transposition, the unnatural construction, let these be reformed altogether. Why too should dulness be an essential of didactic poetry? Goldsmith could not endure its 'disgusting solemnity of manner', he loved innocent gaiety, and found much wisdom in that agreeable trifling which often 'deceives us into instruction'.

With such views, and at a time of life when all his powers were ripe and mellow, Goldsmith published his *Traveller*. Some fragments, perhaps a first sketch of the poem, had been sent from Switzerland to his brother Henry in 1755. *The Traveller*, as we know it, is an attempt to unite the didactic with the descriptive poem. But Goldsmith does not begin with theory, and proceed to illustrate his theory by a series of pictures. He begins with a sigh for kindred and for home. The poem is personal, the reflections, except perhaps the closing ones, which came from Johnson, are such as naturally arose in his mind in the days of his wandering. It would have been easy to have thrown *The Traveller* into the form of an Essay on the Happiness of Nations, or *The Deserted Village* into that of an Epistle on the Dangers of Luxury, and then the wanderer sounding his flute beside the Loire might have risen to the stature of a philosophic spectator with a classical name, sweet Auburn might have appeared as minor term of a syllogism concerned with the abuse of wealth. Goldsmith chose a simpler method, more wholesome and sweet. He had actually smiled at sight of the old dames of the province in their quaint French caps leading out the little boys and girls to foot it while he piped, he had turned away disappointed from the Carinthian peasant's inhospitable door, he had breasted the keen air with the Alpine herdsman, he had lazily stared from the towing-path at the Dutchman squat on his brown canal-boat. Seeking neither wealth, nor advancement, nor toilsome learning, unencumbered by possessions of his own, he had looked on all with a sympathetic eye, an open heart, an innocent delight in human gladness, a kindly smile at human frailty, a sigh and a tear for human woe, and from all he had gathered a store of gentle wisdom, of dear remembrance. He needed only to select from his recollections whatever was most full of charm, what was gayest, tenderest, most pleasantly coloured, and with these to mingle some natural thoughts, some natural feelings. Surely an easy thing, and yet none except Goldsmith had the secret how to do this, to unite such various elements

into a delightful whole—description, reflection, mirth, sadness, memory and love. No one like Goldsmith could pass so tranquilly from grave to gay still preserving the delicate harmony of tone. No one like Goldsmith knew how to be at once natural and exquisite innocent and wise a man and yet a child.

The naturalness and ease of his poetry are those of an accomplished craftsman. His verse which flows towards the close of the period with a calm yet steady advance is not less elaborated than that of Homer and Goldsmith concentrated his verse more in paragraphs than in couplets. His subordinated facility was perhaps harder to attain than the point and polish of *The Ruin of the Ark*. His artless words were each one deliberately chosen his simple constructions were studiously sought. Cooke Goldsmith a scholar in the Temple speaks of the Doctor's slowness in writing poetry not from tardiness of fancy but from the time he took in pointing the sentiment, and polishing the versification. In writing *The Deserted Village* the Doctor as Cooke again tells us, first sketched a part of his design in prose in which he threw out his ideas as they occurred to him; he then sat down carefully to versify them, correct them, and add such other ideas as he thought better fitted to the subject; and if sometimes he would exceed his prose design by writing several verses impromptu, these he would take singular pains afterwards to revise lest they should be found unconnected with his main design. When Cooke entered the Doctor's chamber one morning Goldsmith with some elation read aloud to him the ten lines beginning

Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease  
Seats of my youth when every sport could please

'Come let me tell you this is no bad morning's work, he said; and now my dear boy if you are not better engaged, I should be glad to enjoy a Shoemaker's Holiday with you.

Whether *The Traveller* or *The Deserted Village* be the more admirable poem, whether Auburn be an English village or the Irish Lissoy or both in one whether Goldsmith's political economy be solid or sentimental, it is perhaps not necessary once more to discuss. Perhaps Auburn bordered on Shakespeare's Forest of Arden, and the doctrines concerning agricultural and commercial prosperity were suited to that neighbourhood. It would be pleasant to hear Jaques and Touchstone discuss them, taking opposite sides. Certainly Auburn is English, but certainly too

Paddy Byrne kept school there, and Uncle Contarine or Henry Goldsmith occupied the rectory. In whatever shire or county situated, we know Auburn better than any other village, its sweet confusion of rural sounds is in our ears, we have seen its children hanging on the venerable preacher's gown, we have played truant from the stern schoolmaster, and trembled in his presence, we know the clicking of the ale-house clock, and have felt the old, plain pathos of the woodman's ballad! And we grieve that Auburn is departed. It may be a weak retreat into the age of sentiment and simplicity and Rousseau, perhaps we ought rather exult in the triumphs of modern civilisation and the progress of modern science. Still the flowers of an old garden-croft smell sweet, and the hawthorn bush is white under which lovers whisper.

The ballad of *Edwin and Angelina*, *The Haunch of Venison*, and *Retaliation* mark the extremes of Goldsmith's somewhat limited range in verse. Any reader of the ballad who pleases may make a wry face, along with Kenrick of Grub Street, at the insipidity of Dr Goldsmith's negus, and may seek elsewhere some livelier liquor. We feel differently, for we have heard this ballad in the open air from Mr Burchell's manly throat, while Sophia in her new ribbons languished in the hay. To us, the love-lorn stranger is an eighteenth-century cousin—and so perhaps a little modish—of Rosalind and Viola. Those earlier disguisers bore themselves no doubt more gallantly, with more of saucy archness, but none was more sweetly discovered than Goldsmith's pretty pilgrim by her mantling blush, and bashful glance, and rising breast. In *The Haunch of Venison* we have a miniature farce, and Goldsmith good-naturedly includes himself among the persons to be laughed at. *Retaliation* is the most mischievous, and the most playful, the friendliest and the faithfulest of satires. How much better we know Garrick because Goldsmith has shown him to us in his acting off the stage! And do we as often think of Reynolds in any attitude as in that of smiling non-listener to the critical coxcombs

'When they talked of their Raphaels, Correggios and stuff,  
He shifted his trumpet and only took snuff'

Would that portraits of Johnson and Boswell had been added!

EDWARD DOWDEN

## FROM 'THE DESERTED VILLAGE.

Sweet Auburn! lovellest village of the plain,  
Where health and plenty cheered the labouring swain,  
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,  
And parting summer's lingering blooms delayed  
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,  
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,  
How often have I lolloped o'er thy green  
Where humble happiness endeared each scene!  
How often have I paused on every charm,  
The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm,  
The never falling brook, the busy mill,  
The decent church that topt the neighbouring hill,  
The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,  
For talking age and whispering lovers made!  
How often have I blest the coming day  
When toil remitting lent its turn to play,  
And all the village train, from labour free,  
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree,  
While many a pastime circled in the shade,  
The young contending as the old surveyed;  
And many a gambol frolicked o'er the ground,  
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round.  
And still as each repeated pleasure tired,  
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspired;  
The dancing pair that simply sought renown  
By holding out to tire each other down;  
The swain mistrustless of his smutted face,  
While secret laughter tittered round the place;  
The bashful virgin's sidelong looks of love,  
The matron's glance that would those looks reprove.  
These were thy charms, sweet village! sports like these  
With sweet succession, taught even toil to please  
These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed,  
These were thy charms—but all these charms are fled.

Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,  
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn :  
Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,  
And desolation saddens all thy green  
One only master grasps the whole domain,  
And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain ,  
No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,  
But, choked with sedges, works its weedy way ,  
Along thy glades, a solitary guest,  
The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest ,  
Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies,  
And tires their echoes with unvaried cries  
Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,  
And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering wall,  
And, trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,  
Far, far away, thy children leave the land.

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,  
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay  
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade ,  
A breath can make them, as a breath has made  
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,  
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.

A time there was, ere England's griefs began,  
When every rood of ground maintained its man ,  
For him light labour spread her wholesome store,  
Just gave what life required, but gave no more .  
His best companions, innocence and health ,  
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.

But times are altered , trade's unfeeling train  
Usurp the land and dispossess the swain ,  
Along the lawn, where scattered hamlets rose,  
Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose ;  
And every want to opulence allied,  
And every pang that folly pays to pride.  
Those gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,  
Those calm desires that asked but little room,

Those healthful sports that graced the peaceful scene,  
Lived in each look, and brightened all the green ;  
These, far departing seek a kinder shore,  
And rural mirth and manners are no more.

Sweet Auburn ! parent of the blissful hour  
Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power  
Here, as I take my solitary rounds,  
Amidst thy tangling walks, and ruined grounds,  
And, many a year elapsed, return to view  
Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew  
Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,  
Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.

In all my wanderings round this world of care,  
In all my griefs—and God has given my share—  
I still had hopes my latest hours to crown,  
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down ;  
To husband out life's taper at the close,  
And keep the flame from wasting by repose  
I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,  
Amidst the swains to show my book learned skill,  
Around my fire an evening group to draw  
And tell of all I felt, and all I saw  
And, as a hare, whom hounds and horns pursue,  
Pants to the place from whence at first she flew  
I still had hopes, my long vexations past,  
Here to return—and die at home at last.

O blest retirement, friend to life's decline,  
Retreats from care, that never must be mine,  
How happy he who crowns, in shades like these,  
A youth of labour with an age of ease ;  
Who quits a world where strong temptations try  
And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly !  
For him no wretches, born to work and weep,  
Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep  
Nor surly porter stands in guilty state,  
To spurn imploring famine from the gate ;

But on he moves to meet his latter end,  
Angels around befriending virtue's friend,  
Bends to the grave with unperceived decay,  
While resignation gently slopes the way,  
And, all his prospects brightening to the last,  
His heaven commences ere the world be past !

Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close  
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose,  
There, as I past with careless steps and slow,  
The mingling notes came softened from below,  
The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung,  
The sober herd that lowed to meet their young,  
The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,  
The playful children just let loose from school,  
The watchdog's voice that bayed the whispering wind,  
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind,  
These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,  
And filled each pause the nightingale had made.  
But now the sounds of population fail,  
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,  
No busy steps the grass-grown footway tread,  
For all the bloomy flush of life is fled.  
All but yon widowed, solitary thing,  
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring,  
She, wretched matron, forced in age, for bread,  
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,  
To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn,  
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn,  
She only left of all the harmless train,  
The sad historian of the pensive plain

Near yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,  
And still where many a garden flower grows wild,  
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,  
The village preacher's modest mansion rose.  
A man he was to all the country dear,  
And passing rich with forty pounds a year,  
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,  
Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change his place.

Unpractised he to fawn, or seek for power  
By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour  
Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,  
More skilled to raise the wretched than to rise.  
His house was known to all the vagrant train,  
He chid their wanderings, but relieved their pain ;  
The long remembered beggar was his guest,  
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast ;  
The ruined spendthrift, now no longer proud,  
Claimed kindred there, and had his claims allowed ;  
The broken soldier kindly bade to stay  
Sat by his fire, and talked the night away  
Wept o'er his wounds, or tales of sorrow done,  
Shouldered his crutch, and showed how fields were won  
Pleased with his guests, the good man learned to glow  
And quite forgot their vices in their woe  
Careless their merits, or their faults to scan,  
His pity gave ere charity began.

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,  
And even his fallings leaned to virtue's side ;  
But in his duty prompt at every call,  
He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for all.  
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries  
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,  
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay  
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way

Beside the bed where parting life was laid,  
And sorrow, guilt, and pain, by turns dismayed  
The reverend champion stood. At his control  
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul  
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,  
And his last faltering accents whispered praise.

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,  
His looks adorned the venerable place  
Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway  
And fools, who came to scoff, remained to pray

The service past, around the pious man,  
With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran,  
Even children followed with endearing wile,  
And plucked his gown, to share the good man's smile  
His ready smile a parent's warmth expressed,  
Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distressed,  
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,  
But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven  
As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,  
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,  
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,  
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,  
With blossomed furze unprofitably gay,  
There, in his noisy mansion, skilled to rule,  
The village master taught his little school,  
A man severe he was, and stern to view,  
I knew him well, and every truant knew,  
Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace  
The day's disasters in his morning face,  
Full well they laughed with counterfeited glee  
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he,  
Full well the busy whisper circling round,  
Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned;  
Yet he was kind, or, if severe in aught,  
The love he bore to learning was in fault,  
The village all declared how much he knew;  
'Twas certain he could write and cypher too,  
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,  
And even the story ran—that he could gauge,  
In arguing too, the parson owned his skill,  
For even though vanquished, he could argue still,  
While words of learned length and thundering sound  
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around,  
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew,  
That one small head could carry all he knew

But past is all his fame. The very spot  
Where many a time he triumphed, is forgot.  
Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,  
Where once the sign post caught the passing eye,  
Low lies that house where nut brown draughts inspired,  
Where grey-beard mirth, and smiling toll retired,  
Where village statesmen talked with looks profound,  
And news much older than their ale went round.  
Imagination fondly stoops to trace  
The parlour splendours of that festive place ;  
The white-washed wall, the nicely sanded floor  
The varnished clock that clicked behind the door :  
The chest contrived a double debt to pay  
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day ;  
The pictures placed for ornament and use,  
The twelve good rules, the royal game of goose ;  
The hearth, except when winter chilled the day  
With aspen boughs, and flowers and fennel gay  
While broken tea-cups, wisely kept for show  
Ranged o'er the chimney glistened in a row

Vain transitory splendour ! could not all  
Relieve the tottering mansion from its fall ?  
Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart  
An hour's importance to the poor man's heart ;  
Thither no more the peasant shall repair  
To sweet oblivion of his daily care ;  
No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,  
No more the woodman's ballad shall prevail ;  
No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear  
Relax his ponderous strength, and lean to hear ;  
The host himself no longer shall be found  
Careful to see the mantling bliss go round ;  
Nor the coy maid, half willing to be prest,  
Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest.

## FROM 'RETAIATION'

Here lies our good Edmund<sup>1</sup>, whose genius was such,  
 We scarcely can praise it, or blame it, too much,  
 Who, born for the universe, narrowed his mind,  
 And to party gave up what was meant for mankind  
 Though fraught with all learning, yet straining his throat,  
 To persuade Tommy Townshend<sup>2</sup> to lend him a vote  
 Who, too deep for his hearers, still went on refining,  
 And thought of convincing, while they thought of dining,  
 Though equal to all things, for all things unfit,  
 Too nice for a statesman, too proud for a wit,  
 For a patriot too cool, for a drudge disobedient;  
 And too fond of the *right* to pursue the *expedient*  
 In short, 'twas his fate, unemployed, or in place, sir,  
 To eat mutton cold, and cut blocks with a razor

\*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*

Here lies David Garrick, describe me who can,  
 An abridgment of all that was pleasant in man,  
 As an actor, confessed without rival to shine  
 As a wit, if not first, in the very first line  
 Yet, with talents like these, and an excellent heart,  
 The man had his failings, a dupe to his art  
 Like an ill-judging beauty, his colours he spread,  
 And beplastered with rouge his own natural red.  
 On the stage he was natural, simple, affecting,  
 'Twas only that, when he was off, he was acting  
 With no reason on earth to go out of his way,  
 He turned and he varied full ten times a day  
 Though secure of our hearts, yet confoundedly sick,  
 If they were not his own by finessing and trick  
 He cast off his friends, as a huntsman his pack,  
 For he knew when he pleased he could whistle them back  
 Of praise a mere glutton, he swallowed what came,  
 And the puff of a dunce he mistook it for fame,  
 Till his relish grown callous, almost to disease,  
 Who peppered the highest, was surest to please.

<sup>1</sup> Edmund Burke

<sup>2</sup> Mr T Townshend, M P for Whitchurch afterwards Lord Sydney

But let us be candid, and speak out our mind,  
 If dunces applauded, he paid them in kind.  
 Ye Kennicks, ye Kellys<sup>1</sup> and Woodfalls<sup>2</sup> so grave,  
 What a commerce was yours, while you got and you gavel  
 How did Grub-street re-echo the shouts that you raised,  
 While he was be Roscused, and you were bepraised !  
 But peace to his spirit, wherever it flies,  
 To act as an angel and mix with the skies  
 Those poets who owe their best fame to his skill,  
 Shall still be his flatterers, go where he will,  
 Old Shakspeare receive him with praise and with love,  
 And Beaumonts and Bens be his Kellys above.

\* \* \* \* \*

Here Reynolds is laid, and, to tell you my mind,  
 He has not left a wiser or better behind ;  
 His pencil was striking, resistless, and grand  
 His manners were gentle, complying and bland ;  
 Still born to improve us in every part,  
 His pencil our faces, his manners our heart :  
 To coxcombs averse, yet most civilly steering,  
 When they judged without skill, he was still hard of hearing :  
 When they talked of their Raphaels, Correggios, and stuff,  
 He shifted his trumpet<sup>3</sup> and only took snuff

#### STANZAS ON WOMAN

When lovely Woman stoops to folly  
 And finds too late that men betray  
 What charm can soothe her melancholy  
 What art can wash her guilt away ?

The only art her guilt to cover  
 To hide her shame from every eye,  
 To give repentance to her lover  
 And wring his bosom, is—to die.

Hugh Kelly author of *False Delicacy* &c. Died 1777

William Woodfall, printer of the *Morning Chronicle*. Died 1803.

Sir Joshua Reynolds was deaf and used an ear trumpet.

## THOMAS WARTON.

Thomas Warton is in his poetry chiefly imitative, as was natural in so laborious a student of our early poetical literature. The edition of his poems which was published by his admirer and his brother's devoted pupil, Richard Mant, offers a curious example of a poet 'killed with kindness', for the apparatus of parallel passages from Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, and others, is enough to ruin any little claim to originality which might have been put forward for him. The *Pleasures of Melancholy* is a cento of *Il Penseroso*, *Comus*, and *The Faerie Queene*, the *Ode on the Approach of Summer* is a mere echo of *L'Allegro*. Again, the influence of Gray makes itself far too strongly felt in Warton's elegiac poems and odes. But there are reasons why his genial figure should not be altogether excluded from a representative English anthology. It has often been said that his *History of English Poetry*, with Percy's *Reliques*, turned the course of our letters into a fresh channel, but what is more noticeable here is that his own poetry—or much of it, for he is not always free from the taint of pseudo classicalism—instinctively deals with materials like those on which the older writers had drawn. In reaction against the didactic and critical temper of the earlier half of his century, he is a student of nature, he is even an 'enthusiast,' in Whitehead's sense. He has two passions, well expressed in the

two sonnets here given—the passion for ‘antiquity and the passion for nature; for the Bodleian Library and for

The field, the forest, green and gay  
The dappled slope, the tedded hay;

and, we may add, for Oxford, his home for forty-seven years, at whose service he was always ready to place his invention, his humour and his gift of satire. The real Warton is to be looked for in the writings in which these passions find their vent; in the *History* in the *Sonnets* (a form of composition which he revived among us), and in the *Humorous Pieces*; not in the quit rent odes which were wrung from him by the unhappy necessities of his laureateship.

EDITOR.

FROM 'THE TRIUMPH OF ISIS'<sup>1</sup>

Let Granta boast the patrons of her name,  
Each splendid fool of fortune and of fame  
Still of preferment let her shine the queen,  
Prolific parent of each bowing dean  
Be hers each prelate of the pampered cheek,  
Each courtly chaplain, sanctified and sleek  
Still let the drones of her exhaustless hive  
On rich pluralities supinely thrive  
Still let her senates titled slaves revere,  
Nor dare to know the patriot from the peer,  
No longer charmed by Virtue's lofty song,  
Once heard sage Milton's manly tones among,  
Where Cam, meandering thro' the matted reeds,  
With loitering wave his groves of laurel feeds  
'Tis ours, my son, to deal the sacred bay,  
Where honour calls, and justice points the way,  
To wear the well-earned wreath that merit brings,  
And snatch a gift beyond the reach of kings  
Scorning and scorned by courts, yon Muse's bower  
Still nor enjoys, nor seeks, the smile of power  
Though wakeful Vengeance watch my crystal spring,  
Though Persecution wave her iron wing,  
And, o'er yon spiry temples as she flies,  
'These destined seats be mine,' exulting cries,  
Fortune's fair smiles on Isis still attend  
And, as the dews of gracious heaven descend  
Unasked, unseen, in still but copious showers,  
Her stores on me spontaneous Bounty pours  
See, Science walks with recent chaplets crowned,  
With fancy's strain my fairy shades resound,  
My Muse divine still keeps her custom'd state,  
The mien erect, and high majestic gait

<sup>1</sup> This poem was written when Warton was an undergraduate, in answer to 'Isis, an Elegy,' by Mason

Green as of old each olived portal smiles,  
And still the Graces build my Grecian piles :  
My Gothic spires in ancient glory rise.  
And dare with wonted pride to rush into the skies.

## FROM THE FIRST OF APRIL

Scant along the ridgy land  
The beans their new born ranks expand  
The fresh-turned soil with tender blades  
Thinly the sprouting barley shades :  
Fringing the forest's devious edge,  
Half robed appears the hawthorn hedge ;  
Or to the distant eye displays  
Weakly green its budding sprays.

The swallow for a moment seen,  
Skims in haste the village green  
From the gray moor on feeble wing,  
The screaming plovers idly spring :  
The butterfly gay painted soon,  
Explores awhile the tepid noon ;  
And fondly trusts its tender dyes  
To fickle suns, and flattering skies.

Fraught with a transient, frozen shower,  
If a cloud should haply lower  
Sailing o'er the landscape dark,  
Mute on a sudden is the lark ;  
But when gleams the sun again  
O'er the pearl besprinkled plain,  
And from behind his watery veil  
Looks through the thin descending hail ;  
She mounts, and, lessening to the sight,  
Salutes the blithe return of light,  
And high her tuneful track pursues  
Mid the dim rainbow's scattered hues.

Where in venerable rows  
Widely waving oaks inclose  
The moat of yonder antique hall,  
Swarm the rooks with clamorous call;  
And to the toils of nature true,  
Wreath their capacious nests anew

Musing through the lawny park,  
The lonely poet loves to mark  
How various greens in faint degrees  
Tinge the tall groups of various trees,  
While, careless of the changing year,  
The pine cerulean, never sere,  
Towers distinguished from the rest,  
And proudly vaunts her winter vest.

Within some whispering osier isle,  
Where Glym's low banks neglected smile;  
And each trim meadow still retains  
The wintry torrent's oozy stains  
Beneath a willow, long forsook,  
The fisher seeks his customed nook,  
And bursting through the crackling sedge,  
That crowns the current's caverned edge,  
He startles from the bordering wood  
The bashful wild-duck's early brood.

O'er the broad downs, a novel race,  
Frisk the lambs with faltering pace,  
And with eager bleatings fill  
The foss that skirts the beaconed hill.

His free-born vigour yet unbroke  
To lordly man's usurping yoke,  
The bounding colt forgets to play,  
Basking beneath the noon-tide ray  
And stretched among the daisies pied  
Of a green dingle's sloping side  
While far beneath, where nature spreads  
Her boundless length of level meads,

In loose luxuriance taught to stray  
A thousand tumbling rills inlay  
With silver veins the vale, or pass  
Redundant through the sparkling grass.

Yet, in these presages rude,  
Midst her pensive solitude,  
Fancy with prophetic glance,  
Sees the teeming months advance ;  
The field, the forest, green and gay  
The dappled slope, the tedded hay  
Sees the reddening orchard blow  
The harvest wave, the vintage flow ;  
Sees June unfold his glossy robe  
Of thousand hues o'er all the globe ;  
Sees Ceres grasp her crown of corn,  
And Plenty load her ample horn.

SONNET WRITTEN IN A BLANK LEAF OF  
DUDDALE'S 'MONASTICON'

Deem not devoid of elegance the sage,  
By Fancy's genuine feelings unbeguiled,  
Of painful pedantry the poring child,  
Who turns, of these proud domes, th historic page  
Now sunk by Time, and Henry's fiercer rage.  
Think'st thou the warbling Muses never smiled  
On his lone hours? Ingenuous views engage  
His thoughts, on themes, unclassic falsely styled,  
Intent. While cloistered Piety displays  
Her mouldering roll, the piercing eye explores  
New manners, and the pomp of elder days,  
Whence calls the pensive bard his pictured stores.  
Nor rough nor barren are the winding ways  
Of hoar Antiquity but strown with flowers.

## TO THE RIVER LODON

Ah ! what a weary race my feet have run,  
Since first I trod thy banks with alders crowned,  
And thought my way was all through fairy ground,  
Beneath thy azure sky, and golden sun,  
Where first my Muse to usp her notes begun'  
While pensive Memory traces back the round,  
Which fills the varied interval between ,  
Much pleasure, more of sorrow, marks the scene  
Sweet native stream ! those skies and suns so pure  
No more return, to cheer my evening road ,  
Yet still one joy remains, that not obscure,  
Nor useless, all my vacant days have flowed,  
From youth's gay dawn to manhood's prime mature ;  
Nor with the Muse's laurel unbestowed

## CHARLES CHURCHILL.

[CHARLES CHURCHILL was born in Westminster in 1731 and died at Boulogne in 1764. A poor London curate, who eked out his salary by teaching, he made a hit by his *Revised* a satire on contemporary actors, in 1761 and during the brief residue of his life abandoned himself to literature and dissipation.]

The celebrity of the smart versemaking of Churchill marks a low point in English taste. It nearly secured him a poet's monument in Westminster Abbey; and it actually secured a poet's rank for a petulant rhymist without a spark of the poet's imagination, of cold heart, natural bad taste, and very little knowledge of that narrow world which he so impudently lampooned. Nothing in Churchill reveals a gleam of genial feeling or justifies the suspicion that he could take any pleasure in what refines or elevates. If we may believe his own account of himself, nature had given him little enough, beyond an ugly face, a sour temperament, and a bitter tongue. Yet he was not dissatisfied. He was very willing to be taken for what he was and if he could not win liking and respect, he was content to be feared. In all this there must have been something of affectation. Yet it is only too clear that the coarse texture of his mind was impermeable to the kindlier and worthier influences of his time. What it most readily absorbed was that hatred of authority in general which keen observers saw widely spread in England long before it convulsed society in France and poverty, obscurity, and habits of monotonous toil, sadly evinced by the industry with which he practised his new-found trade, had even in youth embittered a sour nature, and made him a Jacobin at heart. At all aristocracy social, political, and intellectual, Churchill rallied with vicious delight. The artificiality of his times revolted him with better reason. But with all his boasting of

nature and originality, few writers have less of the true spirit of either. The nature which he really followed was the coarse and narrow nature within him, and his originality consisted mainly in ostentatiously abandoning proportion and propriety. His success was due to his capacity of absorption and imitation. He had studied Dryden and Pope minutely, and learnt the trick of octosyllabic singsong from Butler and Swift. But the knowledge of man, the power of burlesque, the skilful play of jest and earnest, which are the essentials of true satire, were denied to Churchill. His whole stock in trade was his volubility, his bitterness of soul, and his knack of rhyme, and he cast over what he wrote something of the ungenial seriousness of his clerical calling. His address to Truth suggests that he knew where his strength and his weakness lay.

‘But come not with that easy mien  
By which you won the lively Dean,  
Nor yet assume that strumpet air  
Which Rabelais taught thee first to wear,  
Nor yet that arch ambiguous face  
With which Cervantes gave thee grace  
But come in sacred vesture clad,  
Solemnly dull, and truly sad  
Far from thy seemly matron train  
Be idiot mirth, and laughter vain!  
For wit and humour, which pretend  
At once to please us and amend,  
They are not for my present turn,  
Let them remain in France with Sterne’

*The Ghost, Book II*

The description of his muse, with which the following selection commences, is truthful enough. The neglect of his style was no studied air, but arose from natural slovenliness, from imperfect command over brain and pen, and no doubt from unwillingness to strike out lines which produced him half-a-crown a copy when the total of a sheet was made up. The poverty of Churchill's mind is curiously illustrated by the poem on the *Cock Lane Ghost*, a subject which might perhaps have supplied Dryden with materials for a hundred lines. Churchill spins it out to over four thousand. His field was limited to the narrow topics of the town, and his ambition was to be the censor of its manners and the scourge

of its vices. But he failed to become the Dryden or the Juvenal of his age. All interest in his writings has disappeared with their ephemeral incidents and conditions: and that which has redeemed him from oblivion is his bolsterous energy his braven effrontery, his extraordinary command of common pedestrian English, and the sharp relief in which he stands out among the formal poetasters of his day and which perhaps entitles him to be regarded as a precursor of the better school of poetry which arose with Burns, Cowper and Wordsworth. Cowper we know had a real admiration for him<sup>1</sup>. His earliest work, the *Rosciad*, is his best, because in it he most adhered to good models. His later works will serve the student as a rich mine of all sorts of errors in taste and judgment. In proportion as he abandoned himself to his own guidance, his work degenerated, and the poverty of his thought appeared and in three years he had literally written himself out. But in all that he wrote there is a certain fierce manliness which wins attention, and even sympathy for his untutored brain and unsoftened heart, and this effect is heightened by the story of his life and death. No writer requires to be read with more caution by those who seek in literature a reflection of history and politics. The exaggerated Whiggism of Churchill betrays a want of political knowledge and judgment and it did not save him from being deceived by the gross imposture of *The Patriot King*. His adulation of Pitt was part of the cant of the day but Wilkes, the idol of the mob, was the object of his real sympathies, and Wilkes repaid him with patronage. The pair were well matched, and Churchill might be described as the Wilkes of poetry.

E. J. PAYNE.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the lines given on p. 436.

## DESCRIPTION OF HIS MUSE

[From *The Prophecy of Famine*]

Me, whom no muse of heavenly birth inspires,  
 No judgment tempers when rash genius fires  
 Who boast no merit but mere knack of rhyme,  
 Short gleams of sense, and satire out of time,  
 Who cannot follow where trim Fancy leads  
 By 'prattling streams,' o'er 'flower-empurpled meads'.  
 Who often, but without success, have prayed  
 For apt alliteration's artful aid  
 Who would, but cannot, with a master's skill,  
 Coin fine new epithets, which mean no ill—  
 Me, thus uncouth, thus every way unfit  
 For pacing poesy, and ambling wit,  
 TASTE with contempt beholds, nor deigns to place  
 Among the lowest of her favoured race!

## CHARACTERS OF ACTORS.

[From *The Rosciad*]*Havard and Davies*

Here Havard, all serene, in the same strains,  
 Loves, hates, and rages, triumphs and complains  
 His easy vacant face proclaim'd a heart  
 Which could not feel emotions, nor impart  
 With him came mighty Davies (On my life,  
 That Davies hath a very pretty wife!)  
 Statesman all over! In plots famous grown!  
 He mouths a sentence as curs mouth a bone

*Yates*

In characters of low and vulgar mould,  
 Where nature's coarsest features we behold,  
 Where, destitute of every decent grace,  
 Unmannered jests are blurted in your face,  
 There Yates with justice strict attention draws,  
 Acts truly from himself, and gains applause.



## DESCRIPTION OF JOHNSON

[From *The Ghost*]

Pomposo, insolent and loud,  
 Vain idol of a scribbling crowd,  
 Whose very name inspires an awe,  
 Whose every word is sense and law ;  
 (For what his greatness hath decreed,  
 Like laws of Persia and of Mede,  
 Sacred through all the realm of Wit,  
 Must never of repeal admit)  
 Who, cursing flattery, is the tool  
 Of every fawning, flattering fool ,  
 Who wit with jealous eye surveys,  
 And sickens at another's praise  
 Who, proudly seiz'd of learning's throne,  
 Now damns all learning but his own  
 Who scorns those common wares to trade in,  
 Reas'ning, convincing, and persuading,  
 But makes each sentence current pass  
 With 'puppy,' 'coxcomb,' 'scoundrel,' 'ass':  
 (For 'tis with him a certain rule  
 That folly's proved when he calls 'Fool')  
 Who to increase his native strength  
 Draws words six syllables in length,  
 With which, assisted with a frown  
 By way of club, he knocks us down :  
 \*       \*       \*       \*       \*  
 His comrades' terrors to beguile,  
 Grinn'd horribly a ghastly smile  
 Features so horrid, were it light,  
 Would put the devil himself to flight.

## CHARLES THE FIRST.

[From *Gotham*]

List'ning uxorious, whilst a woman's prate  
 Modelled the church, and parcelled out the state :

Whilst, in the state not more than women read,  
 High-churchmen preached, and turned his pious head  
 Tutored to see with ministerial eyes,  
 Forbid to hear a loyal nation's cries  
 Made to believe (what can't a favourite do ?)  
 He heard a nation, hearing one or two :  
 Taught by state-quacks himself secure to think,  
 And out of danger e'en on danger's brink  
 Whilst power was dally crumbling from his hand,  
 Whilst murmurs ran through an insulted land,  
 (As if to sanction tyrants Heav'n was bound')  
 He proudly sought the ruin which he found.

\* \* \* \* \*

Unhappy Stuart ! (harshly though that name  
 Grates on my ear) I should have died with shame,  
 To see my king before his subjects stand,  
 And at their bar hold up his royal hand  
 At their command to hear the monarch plead,  
 By their decrees to see that monarch bleed.  
 What though thy faults were many and were great ?  
 What though they shook the basis of the state ?  
 In royalty secure thy person stood,  
 And sacred was the fountain of thy blood.  
 Vile ministers, who dared abuse their trust,  
 Who dared seduce a King to be unjust,  
 Vengeance, with justice leagu'd, with power made strong,  
 Had nobly crushed the King could do no wrong.  
 Yet grieve not, Charles ; nor thy hard fortunes blame,  
 They took thy life, but they secured thy fame.  
 Had'st thou in peace and years resigned thy breath.  
 At nature's call—had'st thou lain down in death  
 As in a sleep—thy name, by Justice borne  
 On the four winds, had been in pieces torn.  
 Pity the virtue of a generous soul,  
 (Sometimes the vice) hath made thy memory whole  
 Misfortune gave what virtue could not give,  
 And bade the tyrant slain the martyr live.

## JAMES BEATTIE.

[JAMES BEATTIE was born at Laurencekirk in 1732, and died at Aberdeen in 1803. He published his first volume of poems in 1761, *The Judgment of Paris* in 1765, and *Some Lines on the Proposed Monument to Churchill* in 1766. The first part of *The Minstrel* appeared in 1770, the second in 1774.]

Beattie is perhaps the most difficult poet of the eighteenth century for a nineteenth-century reader to criticise sympathetically. His original poetical power was almost nil. But he had a delicate and sensitive taste, and was a diligent student of the works of Gray and Collins on the one hand, and of the ballads which Percy had just published on the other. His earlier poems are merely so many variations on the *Elegy* and the *Ode on the Passions*. His *Judgment of Paris* and his *Lines on Churchill* are perhaps those of his works in which he was least indebted to others, and they are almost worthless intrinsically, besides being (at least the Churchill lines) in the worst possible taste. As for *The Minstrel*, it is certainly a most remarkable poem. The author has shown his judgment in prefixing no argument to either book, for in truth neither admits of one. The poem has neither head nor tail, and the central figure of the youthful Edwin is a mere peg on which to hang descriptive passages, moral disquisitions, and digressions of every kind. The general effect upon the modern reader is exactly that of a sham ruin or a Gothic edifice of the Wyatt period. Yet the poem was, and long continued to be, extremely popular, and it gave the impulse in many cases to the production of much better work than itself. In fact it exactly reflected the vague and ill-instructed craving of the age for the dismissal of artificial poetry and for a return to nature, and at the same time to the romantic style. This fact must always give it an interest which its elegant second-hand imagery, its feeble Werterisms, and above all its extraordinary incoherence, may on closer acquaintance fail to sustain.

Beattie would have been a poet if he could, and his sedulous efforts and gentle sensibility sometimes bring him within sight, though at a long distance, of the promised land. But he never reaches it, and his best work is only made up of reminiscences of others' visits and of far off echoes of the heavenly music.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

## FROM 'THE MINSTREL, Book I.

When the long-sounding curfew from afar  
Loaded with loud lament the lonely gale,  
Young Edwin, lighted by the evening star,  
Lingering and listening, wandered down the vale.  
There would he dream of graves and corpses pale;  
And ghosts that to the charnel-dungeon throng,  
And drag a length of clanking chain, and wail,  
Till silenced by the owl's terrific song  
Or blast that shrieks by fits the shuddering isles along.

Or when the setting moon, in crimson dyed  
Hung o'er the dark and melancholy deep,  
To haunted stream, remote from man, he bled,  
Where fays of yore their revels wont to keep;  
And there let Fancy rove at large, till sleep  
A vision brought to his entranced sight.  
And first a wildly murmuring wind gan creep  
Shrill to his ringing ear; then tapers bright  
With instantaneous gleam flumed the vault of night.

Anon in view a portal's blazoned arch  
Arose the trumpet bid the valves unfold,  
And forth an host of little warriors march  
Grasping the diamond lance, and targe of gold.  
Their look was gentle, their demeanour bold,  
And green their helms, and green their silk attire,  
And here and there, right venerably old,  
The long robed minstrels wake the warbling wire.  
And some with mellow breath the martial pipe inspire.

With merriment, and song, and timbrels clear  
A troop of dames from myrtle bowers advance;  
The little warriors doff the targe and spear  
And loud enlivening strains provoke the dance.  
They meet, they dart away they wheel askance;

To right, to left, they thrud the flying maze ,  
Now bound aloft with vigorous spring, then glance  
Rapid along with many coloured rays  
Of tapers, gems and gold, the echoing forests blaze

The dream is fled Proud harbinger of day,  
Who scar'd'st the vision with thy claron shrill,  
Fell chanticleer ! who oft hath rest away  
My fancied good, and brought substantial ill !  
O to thy cursed scream, discordant still,  
Let harmony aye shut her gentle ear  
Thy boistful mirth let jealous rivals spill,  
Insult thy crest, and glossy pinions tear,  
And ever in thy dreams the ruthless fox appear

Forbear, my Muse Let Love attune thy line.  
Revoke the spell Thine Edwin frets not so  
For how should he at wicked chance repine  
Who feels from every change amusement flow ?  
Even now his eyes with smiles of rapture glow,  
As on he wanders through the scenes of morn,  
Where the fresh flowers in living lustre blow,  
Where thousand pearls the dewy lawns adorn,  
A thousand notes of joy in every breeze are born

But who the melodies of morn can tell ?  
The wild brook babbling down the mountain side,  
The lowing herd , the sheep-fold's simple bell ,  
The pipe of early shepherd dim descried  
In the lone valley , echoing far and wide,  
The clamorous horn along the cliffs above,  
The hollow murmur of the ocean-tide ,  
The hum of bees, the linnet's lay of love,  
And the full choir that wakes the universal grove.

The cottage-curs at early pilgrim bark  
Crowned with her pail the tripping milkmaid sings ;  
The whistling ploughman stalks afield and hark !  
Down the rough slope the ponderous waggon rings ;  
Through rustling corn the hare astonished springs  
Slow tolls the village-clock the drowsy hour ;  
The partridge bursts away on whirring wings ;  
Deep mourns the turtle in sequestered bower  
And shrill lark carols clear from her aerial tower

O Nature, how in every charm supremel  
Whose votaries feast on raptures ever new !  
O for the voice and fire of seraphim,  
To sing thy glories with devotion due !  
Blest be the day I 'scaped the wrangling crew  
*From Pyrrho's maze, and Epicurus sty*  
And held high converse with the godlike few  
Who to th enraptured heart, and ear and eye,  
Teach beauty virtue, truth and love, and melody

## THOMAS CHATTERTON.

[THOMAS CHATTERTON was born at Bristol on the 20th of November, 1752. From 1767 to 1770 he produced a mass of poetry the more noticeable portions of it being the pseudo-antique *Rowley Poems* which were collected after his death by Thomas Tyrwhitt in 1777. He died by his own hand in London on the 24th of August, 1770, aged 17 years and 9 months.]

Chatterton has been neglected of late years, but Mr Skeat's modernised version of the 'Rowley' Poems will, very likely, direct as much attention to them as can be afforded by an age embarrassed already by the wealth it has inherited and by the luxuriance of its own poetic growth. And if in the following selections I have not availed myself of Mr Skeat's modernised text, but have rather chosen a text of my own, it has been from no defective appreciation of the acuteness, the industry, and the learning apparent in every page of his edition, but because he sometimes seems to miss that peculiar musical movement governing Chatterton's ear, which often renders it impossible to replace, by any modern word whatsoever, an archaism or pseudo-archaism of his, whether invented by himself or found in Bailey or Speght. Dominated as he commonly was by eighteenth-century movements, Chatterton yet showed at times an originality of ear that has never been appreciated. As far as I know, indeed, his metrical inventiveness has never been perceived—certainly it has never been touched upon—by any of his critics, from Tyrwhitt downwards. Yet it seems necessary to touch upon it here—technical as the enquiry may seem—or how can we gauge the undeniable influence Chatterton has had, both as to spirit and as to form, upon the revival in the present century of the romantic temper—that temper, without which English poetry can scarcely perhaps

hold a place at all when challenged in a court of universal criticism?

This influence has worked primarily through Coleridge, who (partly it may be, from Chatterton's connexion with Bristol) was profoundly impressed both by the tragic pathos of Chatterton's life and by the excellence, actual as well as potential of his work. And when we consider the influence Coleridge himself had upon the English romantic movement generally, and especially upon Shelley and Keats, and the enormous influence these latter have had upon subsequent poets, it seems impossible to refuse to Chatterton the place of the father of the New Romantic school. As to the romantic spirit, it would be difficult to name any one of his successors in whom the high temper of romance has shown so intense a life. And, as to the romantic form, it is matter of familiar knowledge, for instance, that the lyric octo-syllabic movement of which Scott made such excellent use in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and which Byron borrowed from him, was originally borrowed (or rather stolen) by Scott from Coleridge, whose *Christabel* while still in manuscript, was recited in the hearing of Scott by Coleridge's friend Stoddart. Coleridge afterwards, when *Christabel* was published in 1816, speaks of the anapaestic dance with which he varies the iambic lines, as being founded on a new principle — and he has been much praised, and very justly, for such effects as this —

And Christabel saw the lady's eye,  
And nothing else saw she thereby  
Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall,  
Which hung in a murky old niche in the wall.

That this 'new principle' was known to Chatterton is seen in the following extract, which has exactly the *Christabel* ring—the ring which Scott only half caught and which Byron failed to really catch at all.

But when he threwe downe his asenglave,  
Next came in Syr Boteller bold and brave,  
The dethe of manie a Saraceen,  
Theie thought him a devil from Hell's black den,  
Ne thinking that anle of mortalle menne  
Could send so manie to the grave.  
For his Hfe to John Rumsee he render'd his thanks  
Descended from Godred the King of the Manks.

With regard to octo syllabics with anapaestic variations, it may be said no doubt that some of the miracle-plays (such as *The Fall of Man*) are composed in this movement, as is also one of the months in Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*, but the irregularity in these is, like that of the Border ballads, mostly the irregularity of makeshift, while Chatterton's *Unknown Knight*, like *Christabel*, and like Goethe's *Erl King*, has several variations introduced (as Coleridge says of his own) 'in correspondence with some transition in the nature of the imagery or passion' The 'new principle,' in short, was Chatterton's

Again, in the mysterious suggestiveness of remote geographical names—a suggestiveness quite other than the pomp and sonority which Marlowe and Milton so loved—the world-involving echoes of *Kubla Khan* seem to have been caught from such lines as these in Chatterton's African eclogue *Narwa and Moïed*

'From Lorbars cave to where the nations end ,  
Explores the palaces on Lira's coast,  
Where howls the war song of the chieftain's ghost ,  
Like the loud echoes on Toddida's sea,  
The warrior's circle, the mysterious tree'

And turning to the question of Chatterton's influence upon Keats, it is not only indirectly through Coleridge that the rich mind of Keats shows signs of having drunk at Chatterton's fountain of romance there is a side of Chatterton which Keats knew and which Coleridge did not

It is difficult to express in words wherein lies the entirely spiritual kinship between Chatterton's *Ballad of Charity* and Keats's *Eve of St Agnes*, yet I should be sceptical as to the insight of any critic who should fail to recognise that kinship Not only are the beggar and the thunderstorm depicted with the sensuous sympathy and melodious insistence which is the great charm of *The Eve of St Agnes*, but the movement of the lines is often the same Take for instance the description of Keats's bedesman, 'meagre, barefoot, wan,' which is, in point of metrical movement, identical with Chatterton's description of the alms-craver, 'withered, forwynd, dead'

More obvious perhaps, yet not more essentially true, is the likeness between the famous passage in Keats's *Isabella*, beginning—

'For them the Ceylon diver held his breath,  
And went all naked to the hungry shark,' &c.,

and these four lines in Chatterton's *Lamia and Mored*—

Where the pale children of the feeble sun  
In search of gold through every climate run,  
From burning heat to freezing torments go  
And live in all vicissitudes of woe

It was perfectly fit therefore that Keats should dedicate his *Endymion* to the memory of Thomas Chatterton. Not that Keats or Coleridge stole from Chatterton—no two poets had less need to steal from any one. But the whole history of poetry shows that poetic methods are a growth as well as an inspiration.

So steeped indeed was Chatterton in romance that except in the case of the *African Eclogues* his imagination seems to be never really alive save when in the dramatic masquerade of the monk of Bristol. And here we touch the very core and centre of Chatterton's genius—his artistic identification. This is what I mean: Pope lisped in numbers, for the numbers came—and the *Ode to Solitude* written at twelve shows how early may begin to stir the lyrical impulse—the impulse to give voice to the emotions of the soul that is born to express. The young Chatterton on a summer's day would lie down on the grass and gaze for hours at the church of St. Mary Redcliffe, not in order to gather and focus for expression the personal emotions caused by the spectacle, as the child Cowley or the child Iope might have done, but in order to reproduce the picturesque antique life he imagined to have once moved there—and, as metrical language is but the ideal and quintessential form in which a writer embodies that which in the world around him is ideal and quintessential, Chatterton 'lisped in numbers' too. Not that his egotism was less intense than theirs—far from it. Such energy as his can only exist as the outcome of that enormous egotism which is at the heart of all lyric production. Yet his dramatic instinct was stronger still.

Here indeed is the keynote of Chatterton's work, and, if we will consider it, of his life too. As a youthful poet showing that power of artistic self-effacement which is generally found to be incompatible with the eager energies of poetic youth,—as a producer that is to say of work purely artistic and in its highest reaches unadulterated by lyric egotism,—the author of the *Rowley Poems* (if we leave out of consideration his acknowledged pieces), however inferior to Keats in point of sheer beauty—stands alongside him in our literature, and stands with him alone.

In his childhood, so occupied was Chatterton's mind by the impression upon it of the external world through the senses, that for a long time it refused to be distracted by the common processes of education. Up to about his seventh or eighth year he could not be taught his letters, and even then this was effected through his delight in colour. To use his mother's words, 'he fell in love' with the illuminated letters upon an old piece of French music, and afterwards 'took to' the picturesque characters of a black letter Bible, and so learned to read. And this passion for art was universal in its scope—poetry, music, painting, sculpture, and even heraldry,—from each and all of these he drew such delights as are undreamed of save by the truly artistic mind.

Now with Keats it was not till he came at the very last to write *The Eve of St Agnes* and *La belle Dame sans merci*, that he produced anything so purely objective as Chatterton's *Ballad of Charity*, given on page 409 of these selections. Yet, here is the difficulty in criticising Chatterton's work—the circumstances attending the production of such purely objective and impersonal poetry as the Rowley Poems were so exceptional that, unlike the poetry of Keats—unlike any other purely artistic poetry—it must be read entirely in connexion with the poet's life. This indeed is as necessary, in order to fully appreciate it, as though the impulse had been that of pure personal emotion such as we get in Shelley's lyrics and in the more passionate outpourings of Burns. For, with Chatterton, far more than with any other poet of the representative kind, the question, What was the nature of his artistic impulse? is mixed up with the question, What was the nature of the man? Do these Rowley poems show the vitalising power which only genius can give? and if they do, was Chatterton's impulse to exercise that power the impulse of the dramatic poet having 'the yearning of the Great Vish'nu to create a world'? or, was it that of the other class of artists, whose skill lies in 'those more facile imitations of prose, promissory notes,' among whom Horace Walpole would place him? For neither the assailants nor the defenders of Chatterton's character seem to see that between these two conclusions there is no middle one. Either Chatterton was a born forger, having, as useful additional endowments, poetry and dramatic imagination almost unmatched among his contemporaries, or he was a born artist, who, before mature vision had come to show him the power and the sacredness

of moral conscience in art, was so dominated by the artistic conscience—by the artist's yearning to represent, that, if perfect representation seemed to him to demand forgery he needs must forge.

If the latter supposition is the true one, it does not, to be sure, excuse the delinquencies that shocked the ingenuous author of *The Castle of Otranto*—that work of 'Neapolitan origin and mediæval translation,—but it explains an apparent anomaly in Nature. It gives a kind of harmony to a character which has hitherto been considered so inharmonious. It clears Nature of the impeachment of having endowed a man possessing the instincts of a common forger with human characteristics so noble and so precious as poetic genius, lofty intelligence, courage to do or die, the pride that gives in to death but not to men, joined to a depth of filial affection, a loyalty to kindred, such as stirs within us the deepest emotion whenever we recall the name of Chatterton—Chatterton, the premature man who was also to the last the loving child, who, a few days before his death, went out from his forlorn garret in Brooke Street to spend in presents for his mother and sister those precious pence that would have saved him from famine, and England from the loss of a son so noble and so gifted as he.

The barest outline of his story will show what I mean.—The posthumous child of a poor subchanter of Bristol Cathedral, whose family had been sextons for a century and a half, Chatterton may be said to have succeeded to poverty by inheritance, and to have been reared, from his cradle, beneath the shadow of that wing which is apt to cow genius if it does not silence it—apt to stifle that haughty independence and pride which mostly accompanies genius, and of which Chatterton had more than any poet in our literature, or perhaps in any other. Yet, if the cards of life were so far against him, he was on the other hand dowered by Nature with her very choicest gifts. To a physique healthy and, according to all accounts, beautiful,—possessing indeed that quality of strangeness which Bacon says is essential to the highest beauty,—were added a precocity only less wonderful than the energy which accompanied it,—an intelligence which all the world, including those who reject his claims to the highest poetical gifts, have agreed to call prodigious. It was this precocity indeed which at first attracted attention to him, and which has now caused the reaction against him.

Art has nothing to do with prodigies. But Chatterton's precocity has, like everything else in connexion with him, been misunder-

stood. It did not develop itself in earliest childhood, and when it did show, there was in it nothing one-sided, nothing diseased, as in the painful precocity which in some children repels rather than attracts. It is important to bear this in mind in estimating Chatterton, for assuredly it may be said of the human race, more emphatically than of any other, that any departure from the laws of growth of a species is not to be taken as a sign that the individual will exhibit, at maturity, any unusual amount or intensity of the qualities by which the species is denoted. If an oak sapling should show a rapidity of growth equal to that of a poplar, we should not be driven to infer therefrom that the mature tree would show a firmer texture of wood than an ordinary oak, or a greater power of producing acorns. How, then, can we expect to see other laws at work in man? But that incisive and masculine force of intellect which astonishes us in Chatterton did not show itself till puberty, and might therefore have been, for anything that experience teaches us to the contrary, the first outburst of a unique energy that would have gone on developing and gathering strength with years.

At the age of five the attempt to teach him even his letters had failed, and at six and a half his mother and sister still 'thought he was an absolute fool.' When close upon his eighth year he was admitted to Colston's Blue-coat School, Bristol. While absorbing, as a sponge absorbs water, all the knowledge to be got there, he ran through three circulating libraries, and it was then that he began to show that passion for poetry and antiquities which soon began to dominate his life. The first form, as far as is known, taken by this passion was a strange one, that of a hoax played upon a pompous pewterer of Bristol, named Burgum, for whom Chatterton fabricated a false pedigree of great antiquity, with a poem written by one of the pewterer's ancestors, *The Romaunte of the Cnyghte*. This proving a complete success, though rewarded only with a crown-piece, Chatterton was induced to try his hand at the same kind of work again, and produced an imaginary account of the opening of Bristol Bridge in the time of Henry II, which deceived all the local antiquaries. This was followed by *The Ryse of Peynclyne in Englande wroten by T Rowlie 1469 for Master Canynge*, which deceived Horace Walpole, to whom he sent it, and finally a mass of pseudo-antique poetry, consisting of dramas, epic fragments and dramatic lyrics, which, under the

name of the 'Rowley Poems' gave rise after his death to almost as much angry discussion as the Ossian poetry itself. Some of this work was achieved at school, but most of it after he had been removed from school to the office of a Bristol attorney. A boyish freak resulted in his quitting Bristol for London, on the 24th of April, 1770, and beginning life there as a literary adventurer on a capital of something under five pounds, at a time when the struggle of London literary life was only less dire than it had been thirty years previously when even the burly figure of Dr Johnson was nearly succumbing.

He turned to every kind of literary work,—poems, essays, stories, political articles and squibs, burlettas, and even songs for the music gardens of the time at a few pence each. In May and June 1770, he had articles in *The Freeholder's Magazine*, *The Town and Country Magazine*, *The London Museum*, *The Political Register*, *The Court and City Magazine* and even *The Gospel Magazine*. Among all the literary adventurers of his time there was none perhaps so indomitable as he. Yet all the while, he cherished as fondly as ever those visions of the past that came to him from St. Mary Redcliffe as he lay dreaming on the grass at Bristol. He was half starving when he wrote *The Ballad of Charity* which for reserved power and artistic completeness, no youthful poet has ever approached. Nor did he attack London, as other literary adventurers have done, from the bookseller's shop alone. His sagacity as a man of the world was as wonderful as his literary genius. The penniless country boy living on a crust in Shoreditch, knew that to conquer London he must conquer the one or two magnates at whose feet the great city was content to lie. Thousands of ambitious Londoners of that day would have given much for an introduction to the potent Lord Mayor Beckford before Chatterton had been in London two months he had achieved this, and had so impressed the great man, that Chatterton's future seemed assured. But before Beckford had time to hold out a hand to the young adventurer he suddenly died. This blow seemed fatal to a poor boy with starvation even then staring him in the face. But he fought bravely on and would have ended victorious but for his pride. That which had been his strength was his weakness now. He would not stoop to conquer and the time was come when it was necessary to stoop. To live by literature then was almost an impossibility and he had determined to live by literature or die.

With a masterful pride, for which no parallel can be found, he had already quitted his friends in Shoreditch, lest they should become too familiar with his straits, and taken a garret at 39 Brooke Street, Holborn, where he produced a quantity of literary matter which under any circumstances would have been astonishing, but which is almost incredible if his landlady's story is true, that he was living sometimes on one loaf a week, 'bought stale to make it last longer' At last, when starvation seemed inevitable, he did make one frantic attempt to obtain the post of ship surgeon, but this failing, he refused to try the commercial world, and steadily rejecting the gift of a penny or a meal from neighbours who tried in vain to help him, he struggled with famine as long as it was possible, and then, on the evening of the 24th of August, 1770, he retired to his garret, locked himself in, tore up all his manuscripts, and poisoned himself with arsenic.

It is not to make capital out of the painful interest attaching to Chatterton's life that I glance at it here on his behalf Assuredly the personal interest in a poet having such a story as his, is what the critic has specially to guard against in trying to find his proper place in the firmament of our poetic literature. To divest 'the marvellous boy' of that sensational kind of interest which has been associated with his name for more than a century, and at the same time to do justice to an intelligence which Malone compared with Shakspeare's, and a genius which inspired Wordsworth and Coleridge with awe, would require an exhaustive study of that most puzzling chapter of literary history—the chapter that deals with literary forgery And my defence of him is simply this, that, if such a study were prosecuted, we should find that in matters of literary forgery, besides the impulse of the mere mercenary impostor—as Chatterton appears to empirical critics like Warton—besides the impulse of the masquerading instinct, so strong in men of the Ireland and Horace Walpole type, there is another impulse altogether, the impulse of certain artistic natures to represent, such as we see in Sir Walter Scott (when tampering with the historical ballads), and such as we see in Chatterton when, struggling in his dark garret with famine and despair, he turns from the hack-work that at least might win him bread, to write *The Ballad of Charity*, the most purely artistic work perhaps of his time

W THEODORE WATTS.

## AN EXCELLENT BALLAD OF CHARITY

In Virginè the sultry Sun 'gan sheene  
 And hot upon the meads did cast his ray  
 The apple ruddied from its paly green,  
 And the soft pear did bend the leafy spray;  
 The pied chelândry<sup>1</sup> sang the livelong day  
 'Twas now the pride, the manhood of the year  
 And eke the ground was dight in its most deft aumere<sup>2</sup>

The sun was gleaming in the mid of day  
 Dead still the air and eke the welkin blue,  
 When from the sea aris't in drear array  
 A heap of clouds of sable sullen hue,  
 The which fall fast unto the woodland drew  
 Hlding at once the Sunnè's festive face  
 And the black tempest swelled and gathered up apace.

Beneath an holm, fast by a pathway side  
 Which did unto Saint Godwyn's convent lead,  
 A hapless pilgrim moaning did abide,  
 Poor in his view, ungentle in his weed,  
 Long breast full of the miseries of need.  
 Where from the hallstorm could the beggar fly?  
 He had no housen there, nor any convent nigh.

Look in his gloomèd face; his sprite there scan,  
 How woe begone, how withered, sapless, dead!  
 Haste to thy church-glebe-house, accusèd man,  
 Haste to thy coffin, thy sole slumbering-bed<sup>3</sup>!  
 Cold as the clay which will grow on thy head  
 Are Charity and Love among high elves  
 The Knights and Barons live for pleasure and themselves

<sup>1</sup> Goldfinch.

Used by Chatterton as mantle.

<sup>2</sup> Dortours bedde. *Dortours*, sleeping room. —Chatterton.



'An alms, Sir Priest! the drooping pilgrim said  
O let me wait within your convent-door  
Till the sun shineth high above our head  
And the loud tempest of the air is o'er  
Helpless and old am I alas! and poor  
No house nor friend, nor money in my pouch;  
All that I call my own is this my silver crouch'

'Varlet, replied the Abbot, 'cease your din  
This is no season alms and prayers to give  
My porter never lets a beggar in  
None touch my ring who not in honour live.  
And now the sun with the black clouds did strive,  
And shot upon the ground his glaring ray  
The Abbot spurred his steed, and eftsoons rode away

Once more the sky was black the thunder roll'd  
Fast running o'er the plain a priest was seen  
Not dight full proud nor buttoned up in gold;  
His cope and jape<sup>1</sup> were grey and eke were clean;  
A Limitour<sup>2</sup> he was, of order seen  
And from the pathway side then turn'd he,  
Where the poor beggar lay beneath the holmen tree.

'An alms, Sir Priest the drooping pilgrim said,  
For sweet Saint Mary and your order's sake!  
The Limitour then loosened his pouch-thread  
And did thereout a groat of silver take;  
The needy pilgrim did for gladness shake.  
Here, take this silver it may ease thy care  
We are God's stewards all,—nought of our own we bear

'But ah! unhappy pilgrim learn of me,  
Scarce any give a rentroll to their Lord  
Here, take my senilcope,—thou'rt bare, I see;

<sup>1</sup> Cross, crucifix. — *Chatterton*

A short surplice worn by friars of inferior class. — *Chatterton*.

A licensed begging friar — *Chatterton*.



The sweet strung viol<sup>1</sup> dinning in the dell,—  
 The joyous dancing in the hostel court,—  
 Eke the high song and every joy —farewell!  
 Farewell the very shade of fair disport!  
 Impestering trouble on my head doth come —  
 No one kind Saint to ward the aye increasing doom!

*Robert*

Oh! I could wail my kingcup-deck'd leas  
 My spreading flocks of sheep all lily white,  
 My tender applings and embodied trees,  
 My parker's-grange far spreading to the sight,  
 My tender kyne, my bullocks strong in fight,  
 My garden whitened with the cumsfrey plant,  
 My flower Saint Mary<sup>2</sup> glinting with the light  
 My store of all the blessings Heaven can grant.  
 I am enhardened unto sorrow's blow  
 Inured<sup>3</sup> unto the pain, I let no salt tear flow

*Ralph.*

Here will I still abide till Death appear;  
 Here, like a foul-empoisoned deadly tree  
 Which slayeth every one that cometh near  
 So will I grow to this place fixedly  
 I to lament have greater cause than thee,  
 Slain in the war my dear loved father lies.  
 Oh! I would slay his murderer joyously<sup>4</sup>  
 And by his side for aye close up mine eyes.  
 Cast out from every joy here will I bleed  
 Fall'n is the cullis-gate<sup>5</sup> of my heart's castle stead.

*Robert*

Our woes alike, alike our doom shall be,  
 My son, mine only son, all death-cold<sup>6</sup> is!  
 Here will I stay and end my life with thee,—  
 A life like mine a burden is, I wis.

<sup>1</sup> Swote ribble, sweet violin.—Chatterton      Marygold.—Chatterton.  
 Hantend, accustomed.—Chatterton  
<sup>2</sup> See wille I, fyxed unto thys place, gra.—Chatterton.  
<sup>3</sup> Oh! joleous I hys motherer would slea.—Chatterton.  
 Portcullis.—Chatterton.      Ystorven, dead.—Chatterton.

Even from the cot flown now is happiness  
 Minsters alone can boast the holy Saint  
 Now doth our England<sup>1</sup> wear a bloody dress,  
 And with her champions' gore her visage paint.  
 Peace fled, Disorder shows her face dark-brow'd<sup>2</sup>,  
 And through the air doth fly in garments stained with blood.

## ECLOGUE THE THIRD

*A Man, a Woman, Sir Roger*

Wouldst thou ken Nature in her better part?  
 Go, search the cots and lodges of the hind,  
 If they have any, it is rough-made art,  
 In them you see the naked form of kind.  
 Haveth your mind a liking of a mind?  
 Would it ken everything as it might be?  
 Would it hear phrase of vulgar from the hind,  
 Without wiseacre words and knowledge free?  
 If so, read this, which I disporting penn'd  
 If nought beside, its rhyme may it commend.

*Man*

But whither, fair maid, do ye go?  
 O where do ye bend your way?  
 I will know whither you go,  
 I will not be answered nay

*Woman.*

To Robin and Nell, all down in the dell,  
 To help them at making of hay

*Man*

Sir Roger, the parson, hath hired me there,  
 Come, come, let us trip it away  
 We'll work, and we'll sing, and we'll drink of strong beer,  
 As long as the merry summer's day

<sup>1</sup> 'Doeth Englonde.'—*Chatterton*

<sup>2</sup> 'Peace fledde, disorder sheweth her dark rode' ('Rode,' complexion)  
 —*Chatterton*.

*Woman*

How hard is my doom to work!  
Much is my woe!  
Dame Agnes, who lies in the kirk,  
With colf of gold,  
With golden borders, strong untold,  
What was she more than me, to be so?

*Man*

I ken Sir Roger from afar  
Tripping over the lea  
I will ask why the lord's son  
Is more than me.

*Sir Roger*

The sultry sun doth hie apace his wain;  
From every beam a seed of life doth fall  
Quickly heap up the hay upon the plain  
Methinks the cocks are 'ginning to grow tall.  
This is alike our doom the great the small,  
Must wither and be shrunken by death's dart.  
See, the sweet floweret hath no sweet at all  
It with the rank weed beareth equal part.  
The craven, warrior and the wise be blent  
Alike to dry away with those they did lament.

*Man*

All-a-boon Sir Priest, all-a-boon!  
By your priesthood, now say unto me,  
Sir Gaufryd the knight, who liveth hard by  
Why should he than me be more great  
In honour, knighthood, and estate?

*Sir Roger*

Cast round thine eyes upon this hayèd lea;  
Attentively look o'er the sun parched dell;  
An answer to thy burden song here see  
This withered floweret will a lesson tell

It rose, it blew, it flourished and did well,  
 Looking askance upon the neighbour green,  
 Yet with the green disdained its glory fell,—  
 Eftsoons it shrank upon the day-burnt plain.  
 Did not its look, the while it there did stand,  
 To crop it in the bud move some dread hand?

Such is the way of life the lord's rich rent<sup>1</sup>  
 Moveth the robber him therefore to slay  
 If thou hast ease, the shadow of content,  
 Believe the truth, there's none more whole than thee  
 Thou workest well, can that a trouble be?  
 Sloth more would jade thee than the roughest day.  
 Couldst thou the secret part of spirits see,  
 Thou wouldst eftsoons see truth in what I say  
 But let me hear thy way of life, and then  
 Hear thou from me the lives of other men.

*Man*

I rise with the Sun,  
 Like him to drive the wain,  
 And ere my work is done  
 I sing a song or twain  
 I follow the plough-tail  
 With a long jubb of ale,  
 \* \* \* \*  
 On every Saint's high-day  
 With the minstrel am I seen,  
 All a-footing it away  
 With maidens on the green  
 But oh! I wish to be more great  
 In worship, tenure, and estate.

*Sir Roger*

Hast thou not seen a tree upon a hill,  
 Whose boundless branches reach afar to sight?  
 When furious tempests do the heaven fill,  
 It shaketh dire, in dole and much affright;

<sup>1</sup> 'The loverde's ente' (lord's purse) — *Chatterton's text and gloss.*

What while the humble floweret lowly dight  
 Standeth unhurt, unquashed by the storm,  
 Such picture is of Life the man of might  
 Is tempest-chafed, his woe great as his form  
 Thyself, a floweret of a small account  
 Wouldst harder feel the wind, as higher thou didst mount

### MINSTRELS MARRIAGE SONG.

[From *Celia: a Tragical Interlude*]

#### *First Minstrel*

The budding floweret blushes at the light  
 The meads are sprinkled with the yellow hue;  
 In daisied mantles is the mountain dight  
 The slim<sup>1</sup> young cowslip bendeth with the dew  
 The trees enleaved, into heaven straight,  
 When gentle winds do blow, to whistling din are brought  
 The evening comes and brings the dew along  
 The ruddy welkin sheeneth to the eyne;  
 Around the ale stake minstrels sing the song;  
 Young ivy round the doorpost doth entwine;  
 I lay me on the grass; yet, to my will,  
 Albeit all is fair, there lacketh something still

#### *Second Minstrel.*

So Adam thought, what time in Paradise,  
 All heaven and earth did homage to his mind.  
 In woman and none else man's pleasure lies,  
 As instruments of joy are kind with kind  
 Go, take a wife unto thine arms, and see,  
 Winter and dusky hills will have a charm for thee.

<sup>1</sup> Soft, tender — Chatterton

<sup>2</sup> Yon woman alleynes mannes pleasure lyes,  
 As instruments of jole were made the kynde.

Chatterton.

*Third Minstrel*

When Autumn stript and sunburnt doth appear,  
 With his gold hand gilding the falling leaf,  
 Bringing up Winter to fulfil the year,  
 Bearing upon his back the ripened sheaf;  
 When all the hills with woody seed are white,  
 When levin-fires and gleams do meet from far the sight;—

When the fair apples, red as even-sky,  
 Do bend the tree unto the fruitful ground,  
 When juicy pears and berries of black dye  
 Do dance in air and call the eyes around,  
 Then, be it evening foul or evening fair,  
 Methinks my joy of heart is shadowed with some care.

*Second Minstrel.*

Angels are wrought to be of neither kind,  
 Angels alone from hot desire are free,  
 There is a somewhat ever in the mind,  
 That, without woman, cannot stillèd be  
 No saint in cell, but, having blood and cheer<sup>1</sup>,  
 Doth find the spirit joy in sight of woman fair

Women are made not for themselves but man,—  
 Bone of his bone and child of his desire,  
 They from an useless member first began,  
 Y-wrought with much of water, little fire,  
 Therefore they seek the fire of love, to heat  
 The milkiness of kind, and make themselves complete.

Albeit, without women, men were peers  
 To savage kind, and would but live to slay,  
 Yet woman oft the spirit of peace so cheers,—  
 Dowered with angelic joy, true angels they<sup>2</sup>  
 Go, take thee straightway to thy bed a wife,  
 Be banned, or highly blest, in proving marriage-life.

<sup>1</sup> 'Tere,' health — *Chatterton*

<sup>2</sup> 'Tochelod yn Angel joie here (*they*) Angeles bee' — *Chatterton*

## THE ACCOUNT OF W. CANYNGE'S FEAST

BY WILLIAM CANYNGE.<sup>1</sup>

Thorowe the halle the bell han sounde  
 Byelecoyle<sup>2</sup> doe the Grave beseeme<sup>3</sup>;  
 The caldermenne doe sytte arounde,  
 Ande snoffelle<sup>4</sup> oppe the cheorte<sup>5</sup> steeme.  
 Lyche asses wyldo ynne desarte waste  
 Swotelye the morneyng ayre doe taste.

Syke keene thele ate the minstrels plaie,  
 The dynne of angelles doe they keepe  
 Heie styll the gwestes haue to saie,  
 Butte nodde yer thanks ande falle aslape.  
 Thus echone daie bee I to deene,  
 Gyf Rowley<sup>6</sup>, Iscamm<sup>7</sup> or Tyb. Gorges<sup>8</sup> be ne seene.

## MINSTREL'S ROUNDELAY

[From *Œlla*.]

O sing unto my roundelay  
 O drop the briny tear with me,  
 Dance no more at holy-day  
 Like a running river be,  
 My love is dead,  
 Gone to his death-bed,  
 All under the willow tree.

The above piece is given in Chatterton's original spelling, as a sample.  
 Fair welcome.—*Chatterton*. (Hel-accruil.—*Tyrrelitt*.)

Becomes.—*Chatterton*.

Sauff up.—*Chatterton*.

Cheerful.—*Chatterton*.

The names of Canynge's favourite poets and friends, as developed in Chatterton's Rowleyan system.

Black his locks as the winter night,  
White his skin<sup>1</sup> as the summer snow,  
Red his face as the morning light,  
Cold he lies in the grave below  
My love is dead,  
Gone to his death-bed,  
All under the willow-tree.

Sweet his tongue as the thristle's note,  
Quick in dance as thought can be,  
Deft his tabor, cudgel stout,  
O he lies by the willow-tree !  
My love is dead,  
Gone to his death-bed,  
All under the willow-tree.

Hark ! the raven flaps his wing  
In the briar'd dell below ,  
Hark ! the death-owl loud doth sing  
To the nightmares as they go  
My love is dead,  
Gone to his death-bed,  
All under the willow-tree.

See ! the white moon shines on high ,  
Whiter is my true love's shroud ,  
Whiter than the morning sky,  
Whiter than the evening cloud.  
My love is dead,  
Gone to his death-bed,  
All under the willow-tree.

Here upon my true love's grave  
Shall the barren flowers be laid .  
Not one holy Saint to save  
All the coldness of a maid !  
My love is dead,  
Gone to his death-bed,  
All under the willow-tree.

<sup>1</sup> ' Rode,' complexion — *Chatterton*.

With my hands I'll gird<sup>1</sup> the briars  
 Round his holy corse to grow<sup>2</sup>  
 Elfin Faëry light your fires  
 Here my body still shall bow<sup>3</sup>  
 My love is dead,  
 Gone to his death bed,  
 All under the willow tree.

Come, with acorn-cup and thorn  
 Drain my heart's blood away;  
 Life and all its good I scorn,  
 Dance by night or feast by day  
 My love is dead,  
 Gone to his death bed,  
 All under the willow tree<sup>3</sup>

Dente fasten.—*Chatterton.*

Gre bee.—*Chatterton.*

The original concludes with the following quatrain:—

Water witches crowned with reytes,  
 Bear me to your lethal tide  
 I die! I come! My true love wait!  
 Thus the damsel spake and died

In spite of the words *reytes* (water flags) and *lethal* (deadly) this stanza is a false eighteenth-century note, strangely out of harmony with the almost completely sustained tone of the rest of this noble ditty; it is moreover an awkward break-down in metre. I have ventured to transfer it from the text to this foot note. A word may be needed as to my modernized text wherever Chatterton's gloss-word has been adopted instead of his text word, this is done without notification. Now and then the rhyme or clearness of phrase compelled substitution: this has been specified in the notes in every case of the least importance.

## WILLIAM COWPER.

[WILLIAM COWPER was born at the rectory, Great Berkhamstead, Nov. 26, 1731. His father, the rector of the parish, was a nephew of Lord Chancellor Cowper, his mother was Ann Donne, of the family of Dr John Donne, the celebrated Dean of St Pauls. Cowper was educated at a private school and afterwards at Westminster, where Vincent Bourne was a master, and Warren Hastings, Robert Lloyd, Colman, and Churchill were among the boys. After leaving Westminster he became a member of the Middle Temple and was articled to a solicitor, a Mr Chapman, one of his fellow clerks being Thurlow, afterwards Lord Chancellor. During his three years under Mr Chapman, he saw much of the family of his uncle, Ashley Cowper, with one of whose daughters, Theodora, he formed a deep attachment. Another daughter, Harriet, afterwards Lady Hesketh, was in the later years of his life one of his warmest friends. The engagement of marriage with Theodora was not sanctioned by her father and this disappointment, with other troubles, seems to have greatly affected Cowper, and to have prepared the way for his first attack of insanity, which took place in 1763. The immediate cause was the excitement occasioned by his appointment to two clerkships in the House of Lords, at the hands of his uncle, Major Cowper. His malady was intensified by the injudicious handling he received from his cousin Martin Madan, a strong Calvinist, and it was only after a stay of fifteen months under the care of the amiable physician and verse-writer, Dr Nathaniel Cotton, at St Alban's, that he recovered. He did not resume work in London, but went to live at Huntingdon. There he fell in with the Unwins, and there began their lifelong intimacy. After Mr Unwin's death (1767) Cowper removed with Mrs Unwin to Olney, where they remained till 1786. The peace of Cowper's life at Olney was shaken in 1773 by a second attack of melancholia, which lasted for sixteen months. Before and after that time he corresponded freely with many friends, he joined with John Newton, curate-in-charge at Olney, in composing the *Olney Hymns* (published 1779), but it was not till December 1780 that he began seriously to write poetry, having deserted the art since the days of his early love-verses to 'Delia.' His first volume, containing *Table Talk, Conversation, Retirement*, and the other didactic poems, was published in 1782, his second, containing *The Task, Tirocinium*, and among others the ballad of *John Gilpin*

(which had been published in a newspaper and had become famous through the recitations of Henderson the actor), appeared in 1785. The subjects of both *John Gilpin* and *The Task* were suggested to Cowper by Lady Austen, a fascinating person who for some years was on intimate terms with him and Mrs. Unwin. Afterwards he began his translation of Homer which was completed and published in 1791. The last years of his life, from 1791 to 1800, were years of great misery. Mrs. Unwin was paralytic from 1791 to her death in 1796; he himself was suffering from hopeless dejection, regarding himself, as he had done since his first attack, as an outcast from God. He died at East Dereham, in Norfolk, April 24, 1800.]

The pathos of Cowper's life and his position in our poetical history will always lend a special interest to his work even though it is no longer possible to regard a poet limited as he was as a poet of the first order. He was an essentially original writer owing much of course, as every writer must owe, to the subtle influences of his time, but deriving as little as ever poet derived from literary study. I have not read more than one English poet for twenty years, and but one for thirteen years, he says in one of his letters of the year 1782; and though that would seem to be an exaggeration, it is akin to a truth—that in mature life at least, he cared little for reading English poetry and owed little to it. It is true that he formed his blank verse on the model of Milton, and that Churchill, 'the great Churchill, gave him a pattern in the use of the heroic couplet which he soon surpassed' but essentially he stands alone, as remote from the stream of eighteenth-century verse as his life at Olney was remote from the public life of his day. The poet of *Retirement* and *The Task* is the beginning of a new order in poetry: he is one of the first symptoms, if not the originator of the revolution in style which is soon to become a revolution in ideas. The clear crisp English of his verse is not the work of a man who belongs to a school, or who follows some conventional pattern. It is for his amusement, he repeats again and again in his letters, that he is a poet: just as it has been for his amusement that he has worked in the garden and made rabbit hutches. He writes because it pleases him, without a thought of his fame or of contriving what the world will admire. *The Task*, his most characteristic poem, is indeed a work of great labour; but the labour is not directed, as Pope's labour was directed, towards methodising or arranging the material, towards working up the argument, towards forcing the ideas into the most striking situations. The labour is in the cadences and the



writers who represent the average poetical level of the time, the level out of which Cowper suddenly emerged to charm Dr Franklin. Mr Cawthorne, Mr Emily, Mr Cunningham, Miss Carter Mrs Greville, and a hundred others, are the channels into which the river of eighteenth-century verse diffused itself before it was finally lost in the sand. It is harmless enough, this verse; it is not 'noise and nonsense, like the Della Cruscan productions of twenty years later' but it is incurably *banal* it wholly lacks distinction. When the excellent Miss Carter the translator of Epicurus, has to write an *Ode to Melancholy* (and odes to Melancholy, to Concord, to Ambition, are the staple of the volumes) she begins —

Come melancholy silent power  
Companion of my lonely hour  
To sober thought confin'd  
Thou sweetly-sad ideal guest  
In all thy soothing charms confest,  
Indulge my pensive mind!

When Mr Henley writes an *Ode to Evening* he can choose no more individual metre than that in which Collins had written *his* Ode a few years before. The publishers of the Collection speak of it with pride, as representing an age in which literary merit so much abounds but the candid modern reader finds the merit to be but the merit of a more than Chinese uniformity. Poor Robert Lloyd, Cowper's and Colman's friend, was nearer the mark when he said, just at this time —

Write what we will, our works bespeak us  
*Imitatores, servum pecus.*  
Tale, elegy or lofty ode,  
We travel on the beaten road:  
The proverb still sticks closely by us—  
*Ad dictum quod non dictum fuit.*

In what precisely does this 'something so new in the manner of Cowper's work consist? There is much debate among modern critics as to the answer to this question, which really is the question of Cowper's place in our literary history some<sup>1</sup> claiming for him a kinship with Rousseau, a spirit like that of Byron and Shelley—a revolutionary spirit that he certainly would not have claimed for himself; others—and this is the common view—agreeing with Mr. Arnold that he is the precursor of Words

Taine Stopford Brooke, Pattison.

worth' It would be truer to say that in his own curious and limited way Cowper contains both these elements, the Byronic and the Wordsworthian element, and that in so doing he embodies all the intellectual influences that were silently working around him towards the evolution of modern England. An interesting writer<sup>1</sup> has characterised the tendencies of poetry in the latter half of the eighteenth century as 'love of natural description and attempts at a more vivid and wider delineation of human character and incident', two tendencies which, we may add, are but different forms of one—of the revolt against convention both in art and society. The joy in natural objects, of which we have found traces in many writers since Thomson, begins to be linked with a sense of the brotherhood of mankind, to the religious mind (and the wide reach of the religious revival must be remembered) this sense of brotherhood and this sense of natural beauty being sharpened and strengthened by the belief in the near presence of the Creator and the Father of all. Cowper is the artist who has expressed in a new and permanent form this complex sentiment. He is the poet of the return to nature, and he is the poet of the simple human affections, both nature and humanity being of interest to him because of their divine source, and because of that alone. 'We are placed in the world,' he seems to say, 'by an omnipotent and irresponsible Being, on whose will our life and death, our health and sickness, our prosperity and adversity at every moment depend, and who decides at his pleasure the fate of empires and the issues of political events. The world as he made it is good, but the corruption of man has done much to spoil it. "God made the country and man made the town", and though man cannot live without society, his vices are such that his towns soon become centres of corruption. Hence true beauty is to be found only in unadulterate Nature, true pleasures only in the fields and woods, and in the simple offices of rural and domestic life. To watch Nature at her work, to meditate, to cultivate sympathy with those creatures that are, so to speak, most fresh from Nature's hand—with animals and the poor and the friends of your home—this is the only rational way to happiness, and to advocate this life is the poet's work. On the other hand, he may emphasise his teaching by contrast, by denouncing vice, by satire genial or severe, by drawing in outlines that all may recognise the harm of a departure from Nature.

<sup>1</sup> *Quarterly Review*, July 1862

The poet is a teacher and an advocate his business is to wean the world from worldliness to God.

At fifty years of age, then, and under the influence of his friend of fifteen years, Mrs. Unwin, Cowper began to realise his own powers as a poet, and systematically to carry into practice this theory of the poet's duty. Already in 1776 the gloom of his second period of insanity had begun to roll away he renewed his broken correspondence he took to busying himself about the garden and the house at Olney. His brightest and most active years are those that follow—the fifteen years that begin with the renewal of his correspondence and end with the publication of his *Homer*. It was about 1780 that he began to find his glazing and his carpentering and even his landscape-drawing not enough; to find it unsatisfying

To raise the prickly and green-coated gourd,  
and to look for a more solid occupation than

Weaving nets for bird-alluring fruit,  
Or twining silken threads on ivory reels.

He asked for some employment more permanently exciting and he found it in versifying on the themes set by Mrs. Unwin. What pleasure he gained from his new occupation is told in part in the poems themselves, and is reiterated in those volumes of narrative, humour, chat, argument, criticism, which are the daily record of Cowper's mind, and which so completely justify the title that Southey claimed for him of the best letter writer in the English language. In his poems, indeed, Cowper has revealed himself with a winning *naïveté* that is almost without example and when we add to the autobiographical passages in *Retirement* and *The Task* the friendly confidences of the letters, we find that there remains nothing for the critic to interpret. Cowper explains himself with a simple frankness that makes half his charm.

For example, the letters abound with passages which show on the one hand the pleasure that he derived from his newly found gift of writing, and on the other the moral and religious aim that he believed himself to be fulfilling in his poetry. The necessity of amusement makes me sometimes write verses, he says to William Unwin<sup>1</sup> it made me a carpenter a bird-cage maker a gardener and has lately taught me to draw. Again, in a letter to Newton<sup>2</sup>:

<sup>1</sup> April 6, 1780.

Dec. 21 1780.

'At this season of the year, and in this gloomy uncomfortable climate, it is no easy matter for the owner of a mind like mine to divest it from sad subjects and to fix it upon such as may administer to its amusement. Poetry, above all things, is useful to me in this respect. While I am held in pursuit of pretty images, or a pretty way of expressing them, I forget everything that is irksome, and, like a boy that plays truant, determine to avail myself of the present opportunity to be amused, and to put by the disagreeable recollection that I must, after all, go home and be whipt again.'

In a later letter to the same friend<sup>1</sup>, which refers still more painfully to his mental distress, he says —

'God knows that my mind having been occupied more than twelve years in the contemplation of the most distressing subjects, the world, and its opinion of what I write, is become as unimportant to me as the whistling of a bird in a bush. Despair made amusement necessary, and I found poetry the most agreeable amusement. Had I not endeavoured to perform my best, it would not have amused me at all. The mere blotting of so much paper would have been but indifferent sport. God give me grace also to wish that I might not write in vain.'

And again, as a reason for publishing,

'If I did not publish what I write, I could not interest myself sufficiently in my own success to make an amusement of it.'

Of course, however, as the second of these extracts shows, he has a deeper reason for writing than this, the preacher's and the moralist's reason, that appears so clearly in every page of his poems. 'My sole drift is to be useful,' he writes to his cousin Mrs Cowper<sup>2</sup>, 'a point however which I know I should in vain aim at, unless I could be likewise entertaining.' To Lady Austen, in his well-known letter in verse, he appears as

'I, who scribble rhyme  
To catch the triflers of the time,  
And tell them truths divine and clear  
Which, couched in prose, they will not hear'

To Unwin he speaks of his first volume as

'A page  
That would reclaim a vicious age'

*Table Talk*, the opening poem, is, it will be remembered, an argument to prove that the true field of poetry is the beauty of religion, till then an unexplored land, and that the poet's true function is to

<sup>1</sup> Aug 6, 1785

<sup>2</sup> Oct 19, 1781

Spread the rich discovery and invite  
Mankind to share in the divine delight.

And in the beautiful lines which close *Retirement* he claims the position of a teacher of mankind —

Me poetry (or rather notes that aim  
Feebly and faintly at poetic fame)  
Employs, shut out from more important views,  
Fast by the banks of the slow winding Ouse  
Content if thus sequestered I may raise  
A monitor's, though not a poet's, praise.  
And while I teach an art too little known  
To close life wisely may not waste my own

From the Letters too we can learn much of Cowper's method of composition; enough at least to correct the first impression which we might derive from his poetry that it was the work of a rapid and even careless writer. If there lives a man who stands clear of the charge of careless writing I am that man, he says to Lady Hesketh, in answer to some criticisms of his *Homer* made by General Cowper. His facility is unquestionable but it is a fact that he composed slowly. He took *Nulla dies sine linea* for a motto, and when once he had taken up the profession of a poet he persevered in it, contenting himself when Minerva was unwilling with three lines of *The Task* as a day's production, and thinking three lines better than nothing. When the translation of Homer was in hand the work went on with the utmost regularity. I have, as you well know he tells Unwin, 'a daily occupation—forty lines to translate, a task which I never excuse myself when it is possible to perform it. Equally sedulous am I in the matter of transcribing so that between both my morning and evening are for the most part completely engaged. Transcribing however he thought slavish work, and of all occupations that which I dislike the most' and accordingly he was glad when friends relieved him by copying some of the *Homer*. He deferred to the criticism of those about him, and was glad when his publisher Johnson, suggested an alteration in a phrase. When Newton, of whom to the last he seems to have stood somewhat in awe condemned a passage, Cowper consented with the best grace to remove it — I am glad you have condemned it and though I do not feel as if I could presently supply its place, shall be willing to attempt the task, whatever labour it may cost me<sup>1</sup>. In effect we may say that

during the five years which ended with the publication of *The Task*, and to a certain extent during the years when Cowper was employed on this *Homer*, the writing and recasting of his poetry filled all his mind. The 'pleasure in poetic pains which only poets know' was known to him conspicuously among poets, the critical spirit within him, that independent and fastidious taste for which he is so remarkable, found full exercise, and in the excitement of doing his true work in the most perfect way he seems to have almost forgotten the cloud which had overshadowed him and was soon to return.

The Letters, again, tell us much of Cowper's opinions of other poets. We have already quoted the passage in which he speaks of his scanty reading of them—'not more than one English poet for twenty years'. As Southey remarks, this probably means that he had not read more than one with minute care, with such care as he afterwards spent on Glover's *Athenaid*, when by way of preparing to review it he 'made an analysis of the first twelve books'. In his youth he had evidently been a reader of poetry, and he had an excellent memory. When Johnson's collection was sent to him in 1779 he found that the best poets were 'so fresh in his memory' that the collection taught him nothing. He is fond of mentioning Churchill, the admiration of his early manhood, with something more than respect, here and there he has an acute remark about Pope, as when he says 'never, I believe, were such talents and such drudgery united'.<sup>1</sup> He often falls foul of Johnson, 'a great bear, in spite of all his learning and penetration'. He dissents from his view of Prior, and argues with great skill for a proper recognition of Prior's real poetical merits<sup>2</sup>, while he is so enraged by the Doctor's attack on Milton that he breaks into the cry, 'O, I could thrash his old jacket till his pension jingled in his pocket!' All this shows that Cowper had a clear taste of his own in poetry, a *goût vif et franc*, as Sainte-Beuve calls it in his excellent criticism of him, but it does not show that he was a student of English poetry, any more than his quotations from Swift and Rabelais show that he read much and often in their books, or than the Horatian turn of his didactic pieces shows that he was always reading Horace. The truth is, as we have all along implied, that Cowper is original if the word means anything. 'My descriptions,' he writes of *The Task*, 'are all from nature,—not one

<sup>1</sup> Jan 5, 1782

<sup>2</sup> Jan 17, 1782

of them second handed. My delineations of the heart are from my own experience—not one of them borrowed from books, or in the least degree conjectural. In my numbers, which I varied as much as I could (for blank verse without variety of numbers is no better than bladder and string) I have imitated nobody though sometimes perhaps there may be an apparent resemblance because at the same time that I would not imitate, I have not affectedly differed.

It is this originality this veracity, this exact correspondence of the phrase with the feeling and of both with the object, that marks out Cowper. We sometimes hear it said that he owed much, especially in versification, to Churchill; if he owed anything it was so much 'bettered in the borrowing' that it is hard to discover the debt. The very foundation of his poetry is his close observation of men and things—the same close observation that fills his letters with happily touched incidents of village life, with characters sketched in a sentence, furnishes the groundwork of *The Task* and the satires. The snow-covered fields, the waggon tolling through the drifts, 'the distant plough slow moving' the garden, the fireside; the gipsies, the village thief, the clerical coxcomb, Dubius, Sir Smug—of all these he gives us not only finished pictures, but pictures finished in the presence of the object and not in the studio. The Flemish masters have met their match! says Sainte-Beuve, as he quotes with delight one of these descriptions of Cowper's—might we not say with even greater truth, The English landscape painters have found their pattern?

Yet it is undoubtedly true that Cowper is little read by the very class which is most given to the reading of poetry and most competent to judge it. He is a favourite with the middle classes—he is not a favourite with the cultivated classes. What are the limitations of his genius which prevent his acceptance with them? Mr. Arnold, who long ago called Cowper 'that most interesting man and excellent poet, perhaps sums them up when he speaks of Cowper's morbid religion and lumbering movement. If we are to look to poetry for the successful application of ideas to life, we shall look in vain to *The Task*—for the ideas are those of an inelastic puritanism that would maim and mutilate life in the name of religion. 'Were I to write as many poems as Lope de Vega or Voltaire, says Cowper—not one of them would be without this tincture,—this puritanic tincture. He began with the resolve to make religion poetical, and he succeeded in making

poetry religious, but religious after a manner which his excellent editor, Mr Benham, himself a clergyman, calls 'hard and revolting' And the same temper which led him to measure the Unseen with the foot-rule of Calvinistic orthodoxy, led him to visit the science, the politics, even the characters which he did not understand, with a censure like that of the Syllabus 'It would be hard,' says Mr Benham, 'to find a more foolish and mischievous piece of rant than that contained in *The Garden*'—in the lines where Cowper reviles the geologist and the historian, and we might extend the same sentence to his promiscuous denunciations of London life, of the amusements of ordinary people, even of the game of chess When the Commemoration of Handel takes place, he joins with Newton in crying *Idolatry*! When he writes his *Review of Schools*, it never occurs to him that boys may get good as well as harm from each other's society, and that there may be desirable elements of character that cannot be acquired in 'some pious pastor's humble cot' When he turns, as he often does, to politics, his amiable Whiggism is sorely tried by current events, by the lack of great men, and by the miscarriage of the American war He believes that 'the loss of America will be the ruin of England,' but consoles himself with the thought that the surrender of Cornwallis was 'fore-ordained,' and that the end of the world is approaching 'My feelings are all of the intense kind,' he says in one of his letters, and the Nemesis of intensity is narrowness

Again, in curious contrast to the neatness and ease of his rhymed couplets, there is unquestionably a 'lumbering movement' in Cowper's blank verse, heaviness, difficulty, coming sometimes from the necessity that he was under of adorning trivialities, sometimes from a want of mastery over the language.

'Warmed, while it lasts, by labour, all day long  
They brave the season, and yet find at eve,  
Ill clad and fed but sparely, time to cool'

—There are too many commas, the reader cannot help crying Sometimes, again, we find a worse than Wordsworthian nudity of phrase—

'The violet, the pink, the jessamine,  
I pricked them into paper with a pin',

sometimes an intolerable instance of the quasi-heroic—

'The stable yields a stercoraceous heap',

or a positive barbarism, as here, in *Tirocinium*—

Have ye, ye sage intendants of the whole,  
A ubiquitous presence and control?

We find frequent descents into prose, and rarely indeed a compensating ascent into the higher music of the great poets. How should we find such ascents, indeed, in Cowper? They demand some moving force of passion, or some inspiring activity of ideas, and for neither of these can we look to him. The only passion that really moved him was the morbid passion of despair when the cloud that obscured his brain pressed heavy upon him and it was only when he wrote under this influence that he produced masterpieces, such as that noble and terrible poem, *The Castaway*, and the lines of self-description in *The Task*. His ideas, too have not the inspiring activity necessary to produce great poetry; they are not vital ideas they are seen to be less and less in harmony with the facts of the world as the years go on. We read Cowper indeed, not for his passion or for his ideas, but for his love of nature and his faithful rendering of her beauty for his truth of portraiture, for his humour for his pathos for the refined honesty of his style, for the melancholy interest of his life, and for the simplicity and the loveliness of his character

EDITOR.

## THE PAST AND FUTURE OF POETRY

[From *Table Talk* ]

In Eden, ere yet innocence of heart  
Had faded, poetry was not an art,  
Language above all teaching, or if taught,  
Only by gratitude and glowing thought,—  
Elegant as simplicity, and warm  
As ecstasy, unmanacled by form,—  
Not prompted, as in our degenerate days,  
By low ambition and the thirst of praise,  
Was natural as is the flowing stream,  
And yet magnificent, a God the theme  
That theme on earth exhausted, though above  
'Tis found as everlasting as His love,  
Man lavished all his thoughts on human things,  
The feats of heroes and the wrath of kings,  
But still while virtue kindled his delight,  
The song was moral, and so far was right.  
'Twas thus till luxury seduced the mind  
To joys less innocent, as less refined,  
Then genius danced a bacchanal, he crowned  
The brimming goblet, seized the thyrsus, bound  
His brows with ivy, rushed into the field  
Of wild imagination, and there reeled,  
The victim of his own lascivious fires,  
And, dizzy with delight, profaned the sacred wires  
Anacreon, Horace, played in Greece and Rome  
This Bedlam part, and, others nearer home  
When Cromwell fought for power, and while he reigned  
The proud Protector of the power he gained,  
Religion harsh, intolerant, austere,  
Parent of manners like herself severe,  
Drew a rough copy of the Christian face

Without the smile, the sweetness, or the grace ;  
 The dark and sullen humour of the time  
 Judged every effort of the Muse a crime ;  
 Verse in the finest mould of fancy cast,  
 Was lumber in an age so void of taste  
 But when the second Charles assumed the way  
 And arts revived beneath a softer day  
 Then like a bow long forced into a curve,  
 The mind, released from too constrained a nerve,  
 Flew to its first position with a spring  
 That made the vaulted roofs of pleasure ring.  
 His court, the dissolute and hateful school  
 Of wantonness, where vice was taught by rule,  
 Swarmed with a scribbling herd as deep inlaid  
 With brutal lust as ever Circe made.  
 From these a long succession in the rage  
 Of rank obscenity debauched their age,  
 Nor ceased, till ever anxious to redress  
 The abuses of her sacred charge, the press,  
 The Muse instructed a well-nurtured train  
 Of abler votaries to cleanse the stain,  
 And claim the palm for purity of song  
 That lewdness had usurped and worn so long.  
 Then decent pleasantry and sterling sense,  
 That neither gave nor would endure offence,  
 Whipped out of sight, with satire just and keen,  
 The puppy pack that had defiled the scene.

In front of these came Addison. In him  
 Humour in holiday and slightly trim,  
 Sublimity and Attic taste combined,  
 To polish, furnish, and delight the mind.  
 Then Pope, as harmony itself exact,  
 In verse well-disciplined, complete, compact,  
 Gave virtue and morality a grace  
 That, quite eclipsing pleasures painted face,  
 Levied a tax of wonder and applause,  
 Even on the fools that trampled on their laws.  
 But he (his musical fineness was such,  
 So nice his ear so delicate his touch)

Made poetry a mere mechanic art,  
And every warbler has his tune by heart.  
Nature imparting her satiric gift,  
Her serious mirth, to Arbuthnot and Swift,  
With droll sobriety they raised a smile  
At folly's cost, themselves unmoved the while.  
That constellation set, the world in vain  
Must hope to look upon their like again

*A* Are we then left—*B* Not wholly in the dark  
Wit now and then, struck smartly, shows a spark,  
Sufficient to redeem the modern race  
From total night and absolute disgrace  
While servile trick and imitative knack  
Confine the million in the beaten track,  
Perhaps some courser who disdains the road  
Snuffs up the wind and flings himself abroad.

Contemporaries all surpassed, see one,  
Short his career, indeed, but ably run  
Churchill, himself unconscious of his powers,  
In penury consumed his idle hours,  
And, like a scattered seed at random sown,  
Was left to spring by vigour of his own.  
Lifted at length, by dignity of thought  
And dint of genius, to an affluent lot,  
He laid his head in luxury's soft lap,  
And took too often there his easy nap  
If brighter beams than all he threw not forth,  
'Twas negligence in him, not want of worth.  
Surly and slovenly, and bold and coarse,  
Too proud for art, and trusting in mere force,  
Spendthrift alike of money and of wit,  
Always at speed, and never drawing bit,  
He struck the lyre in such a careless mood,  
And so disdained the rules he understood,  
The laurel seemed to wait on his command,  
He snatched it rudely from the Muses' hand

Nature, exerting an unwearied power,  
Forms, opens, and give scent to every flower,  
Spreads the fresh verdure of the field, and leads

The dancing Naiads through the dewy meads  
 She fills profuse ten thousand little throats  
 With music, modulating all their notes,  
 And charms the woodland scenes and wilds unknown  
 With artless airs and concerts of her own ;  
 But seldom (as if fearful of expense)  
 Vouchsafes to man a poet's just pretence.  
 Fervency freedom, fluency of thought,  
 Harmony strength words exquisitely sought,  
 Fancy that from the bow that spans the sky  
 Brings colours dipt in heaven that never die,  
 A soul exalted above earth a mind  
 Skilled in the characters that form mankind,—  
 And as the sun, in rising beauty dressed,  
 Looks to the westward from the dappled east  
 And marks, whatever clouds may interpose,  
 Ere yet his race begins, its glorious close,  
 An eye like his to catch the distant goal,  
 Or ere the wheels of verse begin to roll  
 Like his to shed illuminating rays  
 On every scene and subject it surveys,—  
 Thus graced, the man asserts a poet's name,  
 And the world cheerfully admits the claim.

Pity Religion has so seldom found  
 A skilful guide into poetic ground !  
 The flowers would spring where'er she deigned to stray,  
 And every muse attend her in her way  
 Virtue indeed meets many a rhyming friend,  
 And many a compliment politely penned,  
 But unattired in that becoming vest  
 Religion weaves for her and half undressed,  
 Stands in the desert shivering and forlorn,  
 A wintry figure, like a withered thorn.  
 The shelves are full, all other themes are sped,  
 Hackneyed and worn to the last flimsy thread  
 Satire has long since done his best, and curst  
 And loathsome Ribaldry has done his worst ;  
 Fancy has sported all her powers away  
 In tales, in trifles, and in children's play

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 In tales, in trifles and in children's play

And 'tis the sad complaint, and almost true,  
Whate'er we write, we bring forth nothing new  
'Twere new indeed to see a bard all fire,  
Touched with a coal from heaven, assume the lyre,  
And tell the world, still kindling as he sung,  
With more than mortal music on his tongue,  
That He who died below, and reigns above,  
Inspires the song, and that his name is Love.

### GRACE AND THE WORLD

[From *Hope* ]

Yet half mankind maintain a churlish strife  
With him, the Donor of eternal life,  
Because the deed by which his love confirms  
The largess he bestows, prescribes the terms.  
Compliance with his will your lot ensures ,  
Accept it only, and the boon is yours  
And sure it is as kind to smile and give,  
As with a frown to say, 'Do this, and live'  
Love is not pedler's trumpery, bought and sold  
He *will* give freely, or he *will* withhold ,  
His soul abhors a mercenary thought,  
And him as deeply who abhors it not  
He stipulates indeed, but merely this,  
That man will freely take an unbought bliss,  
Will trust him for a faithful generous part,  
Nor set a price upon a willing heart  
Of all the ways that seem to promise fair,  
To place you where his saints his presence share  
This only can , for this plain cause, expressed  
In terms as plain, Himself has shut the rest.  
But oh the strife, the bickering, and debate,  
The tidings of unpurchased heaven create !  
The flirted fan, the bridle, and the toss,  
All speakers, yet all language at a loss  
From stuccoed walls smart arguments rebound ,  
And beaus, adepts in every thing profound,



Be punished with perdition, who is pure?  
 Then theirs, no doubt, as well as mine, is sure  
 If sentence of eternal pain belong  
 To every sudden slip and transient wrong,  
 Then Heaven enjoins the fallible and frail  
 A hopeless task, and damns them if they fail  
 My creed (whatever some creed-makers mean  
 By Athanasian nonsense, or Nicene),  
 My creed is, He is safe that does his best,  
 And death's a doom sufficient for the rest."

'Right,' says an ensign, 'and for aught I see,  
 Your faith and mine substantially agree,  
 The best of every man's performance here  
 Is to discharge the duties of his sphere  
 A lawyer's dealing should be just and fair,  
 Honesty shines with great advantage there.  
 Fasting and prayer sit well upon a priest,  
 A decent caution and reserve at least  
 A soldier's best is courage in the field,  
 With nothing here that wants to be concealed  
 Manly deportment, gallant, easy, gay,  
 A hand as liberal as the light of day  
 The soldier thus endowed, who never shrinks  
 Nor closets up his thought, whate'er he thinks,  
 Who scorns to do an injury by stealth,  
 Must go to heaven—and I must drink his health.  
 Sir Smug,' he cries (for lowest at the board,  
 Just made fifth chaplain of his patron lord,  
 His shoulders witnessing by many a shrug  
 How much his feelings suffered, sat Sir Smug),  
 'Your office is to winnow false from true,  
 Come, prophet, drink, and tell us, what think you

Sighing and smiling as he takes his glass,  
 Which they that woo preferment rarely pass,  
 'Fallible man,' the church-bred youth replies,  
 'Is still found fallible, however wise,  
 And differing judgments serve but to declare,  
 That truth lies somewhere, if we knew but where  
 Of all it ever was my lot to read,



A disputable point is no man's ground,  
Rove where you please, 'tis common all around.  
Discourse may want an animated No,  
To brush the surface, and to make it flow,  
But still remember, if you mean to please,  
To press your point with modesty and ease.  
The mark at which my juster aim I take,  
Is contradiction for its own dear sake.  
Set your opinion at whatever pitch,  
Knots and impediments make something hitch,  
Adopt his own, 'tis equally in vain,  
Your thread of argument is snapped again,  
The wrangler, rather than accord with you,  
Will judge himself deceived,—and prove it too  
Vociferated logic kills me quite,  
A noisy man is always in the right,  
I twirl my thumbs, fall back into my chair,  
Fix on the wainscot a distressful stare,  
And when I hope his blunders are all out,  
Reply discreetly, 'To be sure—no doubt.'

Dubius is such a scrupulous good man,—  
Yes, you may catch him tripping if you can  
He would not with a peremptory tone  
Assert the nose upon his face his own,  
With hesitation admirably slow,  
He humbly hopes—presumes—it may be so.  
His evidence, if he were called by law  
To swear to some enormity he saw,  
For want of prominence and just relief,  
Would hang an honest man, and save a thief  
Through constant dread of giving truth offence,  
He ties up all his hearers in suspense,  
Knows what he knows, as if he knew it not,  
What he remembers seems to have forgot,  
His sole opinion, whatsoe'er betail,  
Centering at last in having none at all.  
Yet though he tease and baulk your listening ear,  
He, makes one useful point exceeding clear,  
Howe'er ingenious on his darling theme

A sceptic in philosophy may seem,  
Reduced to practice, his beloved rule  
Would only prove him a consummate fool;  
Useless in him alike both brain and speech,  
Fate having placed all truth above his reach;  
His ambiguities his total sum,  
He might as well be blind and deaf and dumb.

Where men of judgment creep and feel their way,  
The positive pronounce without dismay  
Their want of light and intellect supplied  
By sparks absurdity strikes out of pride  
Without the means of knowing right from wrong  
They always are decisive, clear and strong  
Where others toil with philosophic force,  
Their nimble nonsense takes a shorter course,  
Flings at your head conviction in the lump,  
And gains remote conclusions at a jump;  
Their own defect, invisible to them,  
Seen in another they at once condemn,  
And, though self idolized in every case,  
Hate their own likeness in a brother's face.  
The cause is plain and not to be denied,  
The proud are always most provoked by pride;  
Few competitions but engender spite,  
And those the most where neither has a right.

The Point of Honour has been deemed of use,  
To teach good manners and to curb abuse  
Admit it true, the consequence is clear  
Our polished manners are a mask we wear  
And at the bottom, barbarous still and rude,  
We are restrained indeed, but not subdued.  
The very remedy however sure,  
Springs from the mischief it intends to cure,  
And savage in its principle appears,  
Tried, as it should be, by the fruit it bears.  
'Tis hard indeed, if nothing will defend  
Mankind from quarrels but their fatal end  
That now and then a hero must decrease  
That the surviving world may live in peace  
forbid.

Perhaps at last close scrutiny may show  
 The practice dastardly, and mean, and low,  
 That men engage in it compelled by force,  
 And fear, not courage, is its proper source  
 The fear of tyrant custom, and the fear  
 Lest fops should censure us, and fools should sneer.  
 At least to trample on our Maker's laws,  
 And hazard life for any or no cause,  
 To rush into a fixed eternal state  
 Out of the very flames of rage and hate,  
 Or send another shivering to the bar  
 With all the guilt of such unnatural war.  
 Whatever use may urge, or honour plead,  
 On reason's verdict is a madman's deed.  
 Am I to set my life upon a throw,  
 Because a bear is rude and surly? No  
 A moral, sensible, and well-bred man  
 Will not affront me,—and no other can  
 Were I empowered to regulate the lists,  
 They should encounter with well-loaded fists,  
 A Trojan combat would be something new,  
 Let Dares beat Entellus black and blue,  
 Then each might show to his admiring friends  
 In honourable bumps his rich amends,  
 And carry in contusions of his skull  
 A satisfactory receipt in full

\* \* \* \* \*

The emphatic speaker dearly loves to oppose  
 In contact inconvenient, nose to nose,  
 As if the gnomon on his neighbour's phiz,  
 Touched with the magnet, had attracted his  
 His whispered theme, dilated and at large,  
 Proves after all a wind-gun's airy charge,  
 An extract of his diary—no more,  
 A tasteless journal of the day before.  
 He walk'd abroad, o'ertaken in the rain  
 Called on a friend, drank tea, stepped home again;  
 Resumed his purpose, had a world of talk

With one he stumbled on and lost his walk.  
 I interrupt him with a sudden bow,  
 'Adieu, dear Sir! lest you should lose it now  
   I cannot talk with civet in the room,  
 A fine puss gentleman that's all perfume  
 The sight's enough—no need to smell a beau—  
 Who thrusts his nose into a raree show?  
 His odoriferous attempts to please  
 Perhaps might prosper with a swarm of bees  
 But we that make no honey though we sting  
 Poets, are sometimes apt to maul the thing.  
 'Tis wrong to bring into a mixed resort  
 What makes some sick, and others *d-la mort*  
 An argument of cogence, we may say  
 Why such a one should keep himself away

  A graver coxcomb we may sometimes see,  
 Quite as absurd, though not so light as he  
 A shallow brain behind a serious mask,  
 An oracle within an empty cask,  
 The solemn fop significant and budge  
 A fool with judges, amongst fools a judge  
 He says but little, and that little said  
 Owes all its weight, like loaded dice, to lead.  
 His wit invites you by his looks to come,  
 But when you knock it never is at home  
 'Tis like a parcel sent you by the stage,  
 Some handsome present, as your hopes presage  
 'Tis heavy bulky and bids fair to prove  
 An absent friend's fidelity and love  
 But when unpacked, your disappointment groans  
 To find it stuffed with brickbats, earth, and stones.

  Some men employ their health, an ugly trick,  
 In making known how oft they have been sick,  
 And give us in recitals of disease  
 A doctor's trouble, but without the fees;  
 Relate how many weeks they kept their bed,  
 How an emetic or cathartic sped  
 Nothing is slightly touched, much less forgot,  
 Nose, ears, and eyes seem present on the spot

Now the distemper, spite of draught or pill,  
Victorious seemed, and now the doctor's skill;  
And now—alas for unforeseen mishaps!  
They put on a damp nightcap and relapse,  
They thought they must have died, they were so bad;  
Their peevish hearers almost wish they had  
Some fretful tempers wince at every touch,  
You always do too little or too much  
You speak with life, in hopes to entertain,—  
Your elevated voice goes through the brain,  
You fall at once into a lower key,—  
That's worse, the drone-pipe of an humble-bee.  
The southern sash admits too strong a light,  
You rise and drop the curtain—now 'tis night,  
He shakes with cold,—you stir the fire and strive  
To make a blaze—that's roasting him alive  
Serve him with venison, and he chooses fish,  
With sole—that's just the sort he would not wish.  
He takes what he at first professed to loathe,  
And in due time feeds heartily on both,  
Yet still, o'erclouded with a constant frown,  
He does not swallow, but he gulps it down.  
Your hope to please him vain on every plan,  
Himself should work that wonder, if he can—  
Alas! his efforts double his distress,  
He likes yours little, and his own still less  
Thus always teasing others, always teased,  
His only pleasure is—to be displeased

#### AN AFTERNOON CALL

[From the Same]

The circle formed, we sit in silent state,  
Like figures drawn upon a dial-plate,  
'Yes, Ma'am,' and 'No, Ma'am,' uttered softly, show  
Every five minutes how the minutes go,  
Each individual, suffering a constraint,  
Poetry may, but colours cannot paint,

As if in close committee on the sky,  
Reports it hot or cold, or wet or dry ;  
And finds a changing clime a happy source  
Of wise reflection, and well timed discourse.  
We next inquire, but softly and by stealth,  
Like conservators of the public health,  
Of epidemic throats, if such there are,  
And coughs, and rheuma, and phthisic, and catarrh.  
That theme exhausted, a wide chasm ensues,  
Filled up at last with interesting news,  
Who danced with whom, and who are like to wed,  
And who is hanged, and who is brought to bed ;  
But fear to call a more important cause,  
As if 'twere treason against English laws.  
The visit paid, with ecstasy we come,  
As from a seven years' transportation, home,  
And there resume an unembarrassed brow  
Recovering what we lost we know not how  
The faculties that seemed reduced to nought,  
Expression and the privilege of thought.

## DEJECTION AND RETIREMENT THE RETIRED STATESMAN

[From *Retirement*]

Virtuous and faithful HEBERDEN<sup>1</sup> whose skill  
Attempts no task it cannot well fulfil,  
Gives melancholy up to nature's care,  
And sends the patient into purer air  
Look where he comes—in this embowered alcove,  
Stand close concealed, and see a statue move  
Lips busy and eyes fixed, foot falling slow  
Arms hanging idly down, hands clasped below,  
Interpret to the marking eye distress,  
Such as its symptoms can alone express.  
That tongue is silent now ; that silent tongue  
Could argue once, could jest or join the song

The celebrated Dr William Heberden (1710-1800).

Could give advice, could censure or commend,  
Or charm the sorrows of a drooping friend.  
Renounced alike its office and its sport,  
Its brisker and its graver strains fall short ,  
Both fail beneath a fever's secret sway,  
And like a summer brook are past away  
This is a sight for Pity to peruse,  
Till she resemble faintly what she views,  
Till sympathy contract a kindred pain,  
Pierced with the woes that she laments in vain  
This, of all maladies that man infest,  
Claims most compassion, and receives the least  
Job felt it, when he groaned beneath the rod  
And the barbed arrows of a frowning God ,  
And such emollients as his friends could spare,  
Friends such as his for modern Jobs prepare.  
Blest, rather curst, with hearts that never feel,  
Kept snug in caskets of close hammered steel,  
With mouths made only to grin wide and eat,  
And minds that deem derided pain a treat ,  
With limbs of British oak, and nerves of wire,  
And wit, that puppet-prompters might inspire,  
Their sovereign nostrum is a clumsy joke  
On pangs enforced with God's severest stroke.  
But with a soul, that ever felt the sting  
Of sorrow, sorrow is a sacred thing  
Not to molest, or irritate, or raise  
A laugh at its expense, is slender praise ,  
He, that has not usurped the name of man,  
Does all, and deems too little all, he can  
To assuage the throbbings of the festered part,  
And stanch the bleedings of a broken heart.  
'Tis not, as heads that never ache suppose,  
Forgery of fancy, and a dream of woes ,  
Man is a harp whose chords elude the sight,  
Each yielding harmony, disposed aright ,  
The screws reversed (a task which if He please  
God in a moment executes with ease)  
Ten thousand thousand strings at once go loose,

Lost, till He tune them, all their power and use.  
Then neither heathy wilds, nor scenes as fair  
As ever recompensed the peasant's care,  
Nor soft declivities with tufted hills,  
Nor view of waters turning busy mills,  
Parks in which Art preceptress Nature weds,  
Nor gardens interspersed with flowery beds,  
Nor gales, that catch the scent of blooming groves,  
And waft it to the mourner as he roves,  
Can call up life into his faded eye  
That passes all he sees unheeded by  
No wounds like those a wounded spirit feels  
No cure for such, till God, who makes them, heals.  
And thou sad sufferer under nameless ill,  
That yields not to the touch of human skill,  
Improve the kind occasion, understand  
A Father's frown and kiss his chastening hand.  
To thee the day spring and the blaze of noon,  
The purple evening and resplendent moon,  
The stars, that, sprinkled o'er the vault of night,  
Seem drops descending in a shower of light,  
Shine not, or undesired and hated shine,  
Seen through the medium of a cloud like thine :  
Yet seek Him, in his favour life is found ;  
All bliss beside, a shadow or a sound  
Then Heaven, eclipsed so long and this dull Earth,  
Shall seem to start into a second birth  
Nature, assuming a more lovely face,  
Borrowing a beauty from the works of grace,  
Shall be despised and overlooked no more,  
Shall fill thee with delights unfelt before,  
Impart to things inanimate a voice,  
And bid her mountains and her hills rejoice ;  
The sound shall run along the winding vales,  
And thou enjoy an Eden ere it fails.

Ye groves, the statesman at his desk exclaims,  
Sick of a thousand disappointed aims,  
My patrimonial treasure and my pride,  
Beneath your shades your grey possessor hide,

Receive me languishing for that repose  
The servant of the public never knows  
Ye saw me once, (ah those regretted days,  
When boyish innocence was all my praise !)  
Hour after hour delightfully allot  
To studies then familiar, since forgot,  
And cultivate a taste for ancient song,  
Catching its ardour as I mused along ,  
Nor seldom, as propitious heaven might send,  
What once I valued and could boast, a friend,  
Were witnesses how cordially I pressed  
His undissembling virtue to my breast ,  
Receive me now, not uncorrupt as then,  
Nor guiltless of corrupting other men,  
But versed in arts, that, while they seem to stay  
A fallen empire, hasten its decay  
To the fair haven of my native home,  
The wreck of what I was, fatigued I come,  
For once I can approve the patriot's voice,  
And make the course he recommends my choice :  
We meet at last in one sincere desire,  
His wish and mine both prompt me to retire.'  
'Tis done—he steps into the welcome chaise,  
Lolls at his ease behind four handsome bays,  
That whirl away from business and debate  
The disencumbered Atlas of the state  
Ask not the boy, who, when the breeze of morn  
First shakes the glittering drops from every thorn,  
Unfolds his flock, then under bank or bush  
Sits linking cherry-stones, or plating rush,  
How fair is freedom?—he was always free  
To carve his rustic name upon a tree,  
To snare the mole, or with ill-fashioned hook  
To draw the incautious minnow from the brook,  
Are life's prime pleasures in his simple view,  
His flock the chief concern he ever knew ,  
She shines but little in his heedless eyes,  
The good we never miss we rarely prize .  
But ask the noble drudge in state affairs,

Escaped from office and its constant cares,  
What charms he sees in freedom's smile expressed,  
In freedom lost so long now repossessed  
The tongue, whose strains were cogent as commands,  
Revered at home, and felt in foreign lands,  
Shall own itself a stammerer in that cause,  
Or plead its silence as its best applause  
He knows indeed that, whether dressed or rude,  
Wild without art, or artfully subdued,  
Nature in every form inspires delight,  
But never marked her with so just a sight.  
Her hedge-row shrubs, a variegated store,  
With woodbine and wild roses mantled o'er  
Green balks and furrowed lands, the stream that spreads  
Its cooling vapour o'er the dewy meads,  
Downs, that almost escape the inquiring eye,  
That melt and fade into the distant sky  
Beauties he lately slighted as he passed,  
Seem all created since he travelled last.  
Master of all the enjoyments he designed,  
No rough annoyance rankling in his mind,  
What early philosophic hours he keeps,  
How regular his meals, how sound he sleeps !  
Not sounder he that on the mainmast head,  
While morning kindles with a windy red,  
Begins a long look-out for distant land,  
Nor quits till evening watch his giddy stand,  
Then swift descending with a seaman's haste,  
Slips to his hammock, and forgets the blast.  
He chooses company but not the squire's,  
Whose wit is rudeness, whose good breeding tires ;  
Nor yet the parson's, who would gladly come,  
Obsequious when abroad, though proud at home ;  
Nor can he much affect the neighbouring peer  
Whose toe of emulation treads too near  
But wisely seeks a more convenient friend,  
With whom, dismissing forms, he may unbend  
A man whom marks of condescending grace  
Teach, while they flatter him, his proper place

Who comes when called, and at a word withdraws,  
Speaks with reserve, and listens with applause,  
Some plain mechanic, who, without pretence  
To birth or wit, nor gives nor takes offence,  
On whom he rests well pleased his weary powers,  
And talks and laughs away his vacant hours

The tide of life, swift always in its course,  
May run in cities with a brisker force,  
But nowhere with a current so serene,  
Or half so clear, as in the rural scene.  
Yet how fallacious is all earthly bliss,  
What obvious truths the wisest heads may miss,  
Some pleasures live a month, and some a year,  
But short the date of all we gather here,  
No happiness is felt, except the true,  
That does not charm the more for being new  
This observation, as it chanced, not made,  
Or, if the thought occurred, not duly weighed,  
He sighs—for, after all, by slow degrees  
The spot he loved has lost the power to please;  
To cross his ambling pony day by day  
Seems at the best but dreaming life away,  
The prospect, such as might enchant despair,  
He views it not, or sees no beauty there  
With aching heart, and discontented looks,  
Returns at noon to billiards or to books,  
But feels, while grasping at his faded joys,  
A secret thirst of his renounced employs.  
He chides the tardiness of every post,  
Pants to be told of battles won or lost,  
Blames his own indolence, observes, though late,  
'Tis criminal to leave a sinking state,  
Flies to the levee, and is received with grace,  
Kneels, kisses hands, and shines again in place.

## WHAT TO READ

[From the same.]

A mind unnerved, or indisposed to bear  
 The weight of subjects worthiest of her care,  
 Whatever hopes a change of scene inspires,  
 Must change her nature, or in vain retires.  
 An Idler is a watch that wants both hands,  
 As useless if it goes as when it stands.  
 Books therefore, not the scandal of the shelves,  
 In which lewd sensualists print out themselves ;  
 Nor those in which the stage gives vice a blow,  
 With what success let modern manners show ;  
 Nor his<sup>1</sup> who, for the bane of thousands born,  
 Built God a church, and laughed his word to scorn,  
 Skilful alike to seem devout and just,  
 And stab religion with a sly side thrust  
 Nor those of learned philologists, who chase  
 A panting syllable through time and space,  
 Start it at home, and hunt it in the dark,  
 To Gaul, to Greece, and into Noah's ark ;  
 But such as learning without false pretence,  
 The friend of truth, the associate of sound sense,  
 And such as, in the real of good design,  
 Strong judgment labouring in the scripture mine,  
 All such as manly and great souls produce,  
 Worthy to live, and of eternal use ;  
 Behold in these what leisure hours demand,  
 Amusement and true knowledge hand in hand.  
 Luxury gives the mind a childish cast,  
 And, while she polishes, perverts the taste  
 Habits of close attention, thinking heads,  
 Become more rare as dissipation spreads,  
 Till authors hear at length one general cry  
*Tickle and entertain us or we die!*

Voltaire.

The loud demand, from year to year the same,  
 Beggars Invention, and makes Fancy lame,  
 Till farce itself, most mournfully *jeune*,  
 Calls for the kind assistance of a tune,  
 And novels (witness every month's Review)  
 Belie their name, and offer nothing new  
 The mind relaxing into needful sport,  
 Should turn to writers of an abler sort,  
 Whose wit well managed, and whose classic style,  
 Give truth a lustre, and make wisdom smile

#### A COMPARISON    ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY<sup>1</sup>

Sweet stream, that winds through yonder glade,  
 Apt emblem of a virtuous maid!  
 Silent and chaste she steals along,  
 Far from the world's gay busy throng,  
 With gentle yet prevailing force,  
 Intent upon her destined course,  
 Graceful and useful all she does,  
 Blessing and blessed where'er she goes,  
 Pure-bosomed as that watery glass,  
 And heaven reflected in her face!

#### THE JACKDAW

[From the Latin of Vincent Bourne]

There is a bird who by his coat,  
 And by the hoarseness of his note,  
     Might be supposed a crow,  
 A great frequenter of the church,  
 Where bishop-like he finds a perch,  
     And dormitory too

<sup>1</sup> Miss Shuttleworth

Above the steeple shines a plate,  
That turns and turns, to indicate  
From what point blows the weather;  
Look up—your brains begin to swim,  
'Tis in the clouds—that pleases him,  
He chooses it the rather

Fond of the speculative height,  
Thither he wings his airy flight,  
And thence securely sees  
The bustle and the raree show  
That occupy mankind below  
Secure and at his ease.

You think, no doubt, he sits and muses  
On future broken bones and bruises,  
If he should chance to fall.  
No not a single thought like that  
Employs his philosophic pate,  
Or troubles it at all.

He sees that this great roundabout,  
The world, with all its motley rout,  
Church, army physic, law  
Its customs, and its businesses,  
Are no concern at all of his,  
And says—what says he?— Caw

Thrice happy bird! I too have seen  
Much of the vanities of men  
And sick of having seen em,  
Would cheerfully these limbs resign  
For such a pair of wings as thine,  
And such a head between em.

## BOADICEA AN ODE.

When the British warrior queen,  
Bleeding from the Roman rods,  
Sought, with an indignant mien,  
Counsel of her country's gods,

Sage beneath a spreading oak  
Sat the Druid, hoary chief,  
Every burning word he spoke  
Full of rage and full of grief:

'Princess' if our aged eyes  
Weep upon thy matchless wrongs,  
'Tis because resentment ties  
All the terrors of our tongues

'Rome shall perish,—write that word  
In the blood that she has spilt,  
Perish hopeless and abhorred,  
Deep in ruin as in guilt.

'Rome, for empire far renowned,  
Tramples on a thousand states,  
Soon her pride shall kiss the ground,—  
Hark! the Gaul is at her gates

'Other Romans shall arise,  
Heedless of a soldier's name,  
Sounds, not arms, shall win the prize,  
Harmony the path to fame.

'Then the progeny that springs  
From the forests of our land,  
Armed with thunder, clad with wings,  
Shall a wider world command.

'Regions Caesar never knew  
Thy posterity shall sway,  
Where his eagles never flew,  
None invincible as they'

Such the bard's prophetic words,  
 Pregnant with celestial fire,  
 Bending as he swept the chords  
 Of his sweet but awful lyre.

She, with all a monarch's pride,  
 Felt them in her bosom glow  
 Rushed to battle, fought and died,  
 Dying hurled them at the foe.

'Ruffians, pitiless as proud,  
 Heaven awards the vengeance due;  
 Empire is on us bestowed,  
 Shame and ruin wait for you!

[Extracts from *The Task* Book I, *The Sofa*.]

#### RELISH OF FAIR PROSPECT

Oh! may I live exempted (while I live  
 Guiltless of pampered appetite obscene)  
 From pangs arthritic that infest the toe  
 Of libertine excess. The Sofa suits  
 The gouty limb, 'tis true but gouty limb,  
 Though on a Sofa, may I never feel  
 For I have loved the rural walk through lanes  
 Of grassy swarth, close cropped by nibbling sheep  
 And skirted thick with intertexture firm  
 Of thorny boughs; have loved the rural walk  
 O'er hills, through valleys, and by rivers' brink,  
 Ere since a truant boy I passed my hours  
 To enjoy a ramble on the banks of Thames;  
 And still remember, nor without regret,  
 Of hours that sorrow since has much endeared,  
 How oft, my slice of pocket store consumed,  
 Still hungering, penniless and far from home,  
 I fed on scarlet hips and stony haws,

Or blushing crabs, or berries that emboss  
The bramble, black as jet, or sloes austere.  
Hard fare! but such as boyish appetite  
Disdains not, nor the palate undepraved  
By culinary arts, unsavoury deems  
No Sofa then awaited my return,  
Nor Sofa then I needed Youth repairs  
His wasted spirits quickly, by long toil  
Incurring short fatigue, and though our years,  
As life declines, speed rapidly away,  
And not a year but pilfers as he goes  
Some youthful grace that age would gladly keep,  
A tooth or auburn lock, and by degrees  
Their length and colour from the locks they spare,  
The elastic spring of an unwearied foot  
That mounts the stile with ease, or leaps the fence,  
That play of lungs, inhaling and again  
Respiring freely the fresh air, that makes  
Swift pace or steep ascent no toil to me,  
Mine have not pilfered yet, nor yet impaired  
My relish of fair prospect scenes that soothed  
Or charmed me young, no longer young, I find  
Still soothing and of power to charm me still  
And witness, dear companion of my walks,  
Whose arm this twentieth winter I perceive  
Fast locked in mine, with pleasure such as love,  
Confirmed by long experience of thy worth  
And well-tried virtues, could alone inspire,  
Witness a joy that thou hast doubled long  
Thou knowest my praise of nature most sincere,  
And that my raptures are not conjured up  
To serve occasions of poetic pomp,  
But genuine, and art partner of them all.  
How oft upon yon eminence our pace  
Has slackened to a pause, and we have borne  
The ruffling wind, scarce conscious that it blew,  
While admiration feeding at the eye,  
And still unsated, dwelt upon the scene.  
Thence with what pleasure have we just discerned

The distant plough slow moving, and beside  
His labouring team, that swerved not from the track  
The sturdy swain diminished to a boy  
Here Ouse, slow winding through a level plain  
Of spacious meads with cattle sprinkled o'er,  
Conducts the eye along his sinuous course  
Delighted. There, fast rooted in their bank,  
Stand, never overlooked, our favourite elms,  
That screen the herdsman's solitary hut ;  
While far beyond, and overthwart the stream,  
That as with molten glass, inlays the vale  
The sloping land recedes into the clouds ;  
Displaying on its varied side the grace  
Of hedge-row beauties numberless, square tower  
Tall spire, from which the sound of cheerful bells  
Just undulates upon the listening ear  
Groves, heaths, and smoking villages remote.  
Scenes must be beautiful which, daily viewed,  
Please daily and whose novelty survives  
Long knowledge and the scrutiny of years :  
Praise justly due to those that I describe.

#### CRAZY HATE. THE GIPSIES.

There often wanders one whom better days  
Saw better clad, in cloak of satin trimmed  
With lace, and hat with splendid riband bound.  
A serving maid was she, and fell in love  
With one who left her went to sea, and died.  
Her fancy followed him through foaming waves  
To distant shores, and she would sit and weep  
At what a sailor suffers fancy too,  
Delusive most where warmest wishes are,  
Would oft anticipate his glad return,  
And dream of transports she was not to know  
She heard the doleful tidings of his death,  
And never smiled again. And now she roams

The dreary waste , there spends the livelong day,  
And there, unless when charity forbids,  
The livelong night    A tattered apron hides,  
Worn as a cloak, and hardly hides, a gown  
More tattered still , and both but ill conceal  
A bosom heaved with never-ceasing sighs  
She begs an idle pin of all she meets,  
And hoards them in her sleeve , but needful food,  
Though pressed with hunger oft, or comelier clothes,  
Though pinched with cold, asks never —Kate is crazed

    I see a column of slow-rising smoke  
O'ertop the lofty wood that skirts the wild.  
A vagabond and useless tribe there eat  
Their miserable meal    A kettle, slung  
Between two poles upon a stick transverse,  
Receives the morsel , flesh obscene of dog,  
Or vermin, or, at best, of cock purloined  
From his accustomed perch    Hard-faring race !  
They pick their fuel out of every hedge,  
Which, kindled with dry leaves, just saves unquenched  
The spark of life    The sportive wind blows wide  
Their fluttering rags, and shows a tawny skin,  
The vellum of the pedigree they claim  
Great skill have they in palmistry, and more  
To conjure clean away the gold they touch,  
Conveying worthless dross into its place ,  
Loud when they beg, dumb only when they steal.  
Strange ! that a creature rational, and cast  
In human mould, should brutalize by choice  
His nature, and, though capable of arts  
By which the world might profit and himself,  
Self banished from society, prefer  
Such squalid sloth to honourable toil !  
Yet even these, though, feigning sickness oft,  
They swathe the forehead, drag the limping limb,  
And vex their flesh with artificial sores,  
Can change their whine into a mirthful note  
When safe occasion offers , and with dance,  
And music of the bladder and the bag,

Beguild their woes, and make the woods resound,  
Such health and gaiety of heart enjoy  
The houseless rovers of the sylvan world ;  
And breathing wholesome air and wandering much,  
Need other physic none to heal the effects  
Of loathsome diet, penury and cold.

[From Book II, *The Task*.]

#### ENGLAND

England, with all thy faults, I love thee still,  
My country! and, while yet a nook is left  
Where English minds and manners may be found,  
Shall be constrained to love thee. Though thy clime  
Be fickle, and thy year, most part, deformed  
With dripping rains, or withered by a frost,  
I would not yet exchange thy sullen skies  
And fields without a flower, for warmer France  
With all her vines nor for Ausonia's groves  
Of golden frutage, and her myrtle bowers.  
To shake thy senate, and from heights sublime  
Of patriot eloquence to flash down fire  
Upon thy foes, was never meant my task ;  
But I can feel thy fortunes, and partake  
Thy joys and sorrows with as true a heart  
As any thunderer there. And I can feel  
Thy follies too and with a just disdain  
Frown at effeminate, whose very looks  
Reflect dishonour on the land I love.  
How in the name of soldiership and sense,  
Should England prosper when such things, as smooth  
And tender as a girl, all-essenced o'er  
With odours, and as profligate as sweet,  
Who sell their laurel for a myrtle wreath,  
And love when they should fight,—when such as these  
Presume to lay their hand upon the ark  
Of her magnificent and awful cause?  
Time was when it was praise and boast enough

[From Book III, *The Garden*]

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL

I was a stricken deer that left the herd  
Long since, with many an arrow deep infixed  
My panting side was charged, when I withdrew  
To seek a tranquil death in distant shades  
There was I found by One who had Himself  
Been hurt by the archers In His side He bore,  
And in His hands and feet, the cruel scars.  
With gentle force soliciting the darts,  
He drew them forth, and healed and bade me live.  
Since then, with few associates, in remote  
And silent woods I wander, far from those  
My former partners of the peopled scene,  
With few associates, and not wishing more.

Here much I ruminate, as much I may  
With other views of men and manners now  
Than once, and others of a life to come.  
I see that all are wanderers, gone astray  
Each in his own delusions they are lost  
In chase of fancied happiness, still wooed  
And never won. Dream after dream ensues,  
And still they dream that they shall still succeed,  
And still are disappointed. Rings the world  
With the vain stir I sum up half mankind,  
And add two-thirds of the remaining half  
And find the total of their hopes and fears  
Dreams, empty dreams.

[From Book IV *The Winter Evening*]

#### THE POST THE FIRESIDE IN WINTER.

Hark! 'tis the twanging horn! O'er yonder bridge,  
That with its wearisome but needful length  
Bestrides the wintry flood, in which the moon  
Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright,  
He comes, the herald of a noisy world,  
With spattered boots strapped waist, and frozen locks,  
News from all nations lumbering at his back.  
True to his charge, the close packed load behind,  
Yet careless what he brings, his one concern  
Is to conduct it to the destined inn,  
And having dropped the expected bag—pass on.  
He whistles as he goes, light hearted wretch,  
Cold and yet cheerful messenger of grief  
Perhaps to thousands, and of joy to some,  
To him indifferent whether grief or joy  
Houses in ashes, and the fall of stocks,  
Births, deaths, and marriages, epistles wet  
With tears that trickled down the writer's cheeks  
Fast as the periods from his fluent quill,  
Or charged with amorous sighs of absent swains,

Or nymphs responsive, equally affect  
 His horse and him, unconscious of them all  
 But oh the important budget' ushered in  
 With such heart-shaking music, who can say  
 What are its tidings? have our troops availed?  
 Or do they still, as if with opium drugged,  
 Snore to the murmurs of the Atlantic wave?  
 Is India free? and does she wear her plumed  
 And jewelled turban with a smile of peace,  
 Or do we grind her still? The grand debate,  
 The popular harangue, the tart reply,  
 The logic, and the wisdom, and the wit,  
 And the loud laugh—I long to know them all;  
 I burn to set the imprisoned wranglers free,  
 And give them voice and utterance once again  
 Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,  
 Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,  
 And while the bubbling and loud hissing urn  
 Throws up a steamy column, and the cups  
 That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,  
 So let us welcome peaceful evening in

\* \* \* \* \*

O Winter! ruler of the inverted year,  
 Thy scattered air with sleet like ashes filled,  
 Thy breath congealed upon thy lips, thy cheeks  
 Fringed with a beard made white with other snows  
 Than those of age, thy forehead wrapt in clouds,  
 A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne  
 A sliding car, indebted to no wheels,  
 But urged by storms along its slippery way,  
 I love thee, all unlovely as thou seemest,  
 And dreaded as thou art Thou holdest the sun  
 A prisoner in the yet undawning east,  
 Shortening his journey between morn and noon,  
 And hurrying him, impatient of his stay,  
 Down to the rosy west, but kindly still  
 Compensating his loss with added hours  
 Of social converse and instructive ease,

And gathering at short notice in one group  
 The family dispersed, and fixing thought  
 Not less dispersed by daylight and its cares.  
 I crown thee king of intimate delights,  
 Fireside enjoyments, homeborn happiness,  
 And all the comforts that the lowly roof  
 Of undisturbed retirement, and the hours  
 Of long uninterrupted evening know  
 No rattling wheels stop short before these gates ;  
 No powdered pert proficient in the art  
 Of sounding an alarm, assaults these doors  
 Till the street rings no stationary steeds  
 Cough their own knell, while, heedless of the sound,  
 The silent circle fan themselves, and quake  
 But here the needle plies its busy task  
 The pattern grows, the well-depicted flower,  
 Wrought patiently into the snowy lawn,  
 Unfolds its bosom buds, and leaves, and sprigs,  
 And curling tendrils, gracefully disposed,  
 Follow the nimble finger of the fair  
 A wreath that cannot fade, of flowers that blow  
 With most success when all besides decay  
 The poet's or historian's page, by one  
 Made vocal for the amusement of the rest ;  
 The sprightly lyre, whose treasure of sweet sounds  
 The touch from many a trembling chord shakes out ;  
 And the clear voice symphonious, yet distinct,  
 And in the charming strife triumphant still ;  
 Beguile the night, and set a keener edge  
 On female industry the threaded steel  
 Flies swiftly, and unfelt the task proceeds.

#### SNOW

I saw the woods and fields at close of day  
 A variegated show ; the meadows green,  
 Though faded ; and the lands, where lately waved  
 The golden harvest, of a mellow brown  
 Upturned so lately by the forceful share :

I saw far off the weedy fallows smile  
With verdure not unprofitable, grazed  
By flocks, fast feeding, and selecting each  
His favourite herb, while all the leafless groves  
That skirt the horizon, wore a sable hue,  
Scarce noticed in the kindred dusk of eve.  
To-morrow brings a change, a total change!  
Which even now, though silently performed  
And slowly, and by most unfelt, the face  
Of universal nature undergoes  
Fast falls a fleecy shower the downy flakes  
Descending, and, with never-ceasing lapse,  
Softly alighting upon all below,  
Assimilate all objects Earth receives  
Gladly the thickening mantle, and the green  
And tender blade that feared the chilling blast  
Escapes unhurt beneath so warm a veil

In such a world, so thorny, and where none  
Finds happiness unblighted, or, if found,  
Without some thistly sorrow at its side,  
It seems the part of wisdom, and no sin  
Against the law of love, to measure lots  
With less distinguished than ourselves, that thus  
We may with patience bear our moderate ills,  
And sympathise with others, suffering more.  
Ill fares the traveller now, and he that stalks  
In ponderous boots beside his reeking team  
The wain goes heavily, impeded sore  
By congregated loads adhering close  
To the clogged wheels, and in its sluggish pace  
Noiseless appears a moving hill of snow  
The toiling steeds expand the nostril wide,  
While every breath, by respiration strong  
Forced downward, is consolidated soon  
Upon their jutting chests He, formed to bear  
The pelting brunt of the tempestuous night,  
With half shut eyes and puckered cheeks, and teeth  
Presented bare against the storm, plods on  
One hand secures his hat, save when with both

He brandishes his pliant length of whip,  
 Resounding oft, and never heard in vain.  
 O happy! and in my account, denied  
 That sensibility of pain with which  
 Refinement is endued, thrice happy thou.  
 Thy frame, robust and hardy, feels indeed  
 The piercing cold, but feels it unimpaired.  
 The learned finger never need explore  
 Thy vigorous pulse and the unhealthful east  
 That breathes the spleen, and searches every bone  
 Of the infirm, is wholesome air to thee.  
 Thy days roll on exempt from household care;  
 The waggon is thy wife; and the poor beasts  
 That drag the dull companion to and fro,  
 Thine helpless charge dependent on thy care.  
 Ah, treat them kindly! rude as thou appearest,  
 Yet show that thou hast mercy which the great,  
 With needless hurry whirled from place to place,  
 Humane as they would seem, not always show

#### EARLY LOVE OF THE COUNTRY AND OF POETRY

But slighted as it is, and by the great  
 Abandoned, and which still I more regret,  
 Infected with the manners and the modes  
 It knew not once, the country wins me still.  
 I never framed a wish, or formed a plan,  
 That flattered me with hopes of earthly bliss,  
 But there I laid the scene. There early strayed  
 My fancy ere yet liberty of choice  
 Had found me or the hope of being free.  
 My very dreams were rural, rural too  
 The firstborn efforts of my youthful muse,  
 Sportive, and jingling her poetic bells  
 Ere yet her ear was mistress of their powers.  
 No bard could please me but whose lyre was tuned  
 To Nature's praises. Heroes and their feats  
 Fatigued me, never weary of the pipe  
 Of Tityrus, assembling as he sang

The rustic throng beneath his favourite beech  
Then Milton had indeed a poet's charms  
New to my taste, his Paradise surpassed  
The struggling efforts of my boyish tongue  
To speak its excellence, I danced for joy  
I marvelled much that, at so ripe an age  
As twice seven years, his beauties had then first  
Engaged my wonder, and admiring still,  
And still admiring, with regret supposed  
The joy half lost because not sooner found  
Thee too, enamoured of the life I loved,  
Pathetic in its praise, in its pursuit  
Determined, and possessing it at last  
With transports such as favoured lovers feel,  
I studied, prized, and wished that I had known,  
Ingenious Cowley<sup>1</sup> and though now reclaimed  
By modern lights from an erroneous taste,  
I cannot but lament thy splendid wit  
Entangled in the cobwebs of the schools,  
I still revere thee, courtly though retired,  
Though stretched at ease in Chertsey's silent bowers,  
Not unemployed, and finding rich amends  
For a lost world in solitude and verse.

[From Book VI, *The Winter Walk at Noon*]

#### MEDITATION IN WINTER.

The night was winter in his roughest mood,  
The morning sharp and clear But now at noon,  
Upon the southern side of the slant hills,  
And where the woods fence off the northern blast,  
The season smiles, resigning all its rage,  
And has the warmth of May The vault is blue  
Without a cloud, and white without a speck  
The dazzling splendour of the scene below  
Again the harmony comes o'er the vale,  
And through the trees I view the embattled tower  
Whence all the music. I again perceive

The soothing influence of the wasted strains,  
And settle in soft musings as I tread  
The walk, still verdant, under oaks and elms,  
Whose outspread branches overarch the glade.  
The roof, though moveable through all its length  
As the wind sways it, has yet well sufficed,  
And intercepting in their silent fall  
The frequent flakes, has kept a path for me.  
No noise is here, or none that hinders thought.  
The redbreast warbles still, but is content  
With slender notes, and more than half suppressed  
Pleased with his solitude, and flitting light  
From spray to spray where'er he rests he shakes  
From many a twig the pendent drops of ice,  
That tinkle in the withered leaves below  
Stillness, accompanied with sounds so soft,  
Charms more than silence. Meditation here  
May think down hours to moments. Here the heart  
May give a useful lesson to the head,  
And learning wiser grow without his books.  
Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,  
Have oftentimes no connexion. Knowledge dwells  
In heads replete with thoughts of other men,  
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.  
Knowledge, a rude unprofitable mass,  
The mere materials with which wisdom builds,  
Till smoothed and squared and fitted to its place,  
Does but encumber whom it seems to enrich.  
Knowledge is proud that he has learned so much;  
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.  
Books are not seldom talismans and spells,  
By which the magic art of shrewder wits  
Holds an unthinking multitude enthralled.  
*Some to the fascination of a name*  
Surrender judgment hoodwinked. Some the style  
Infatuates, and through labyrinths and wilds  
Of error leads them, by a tune entranced.  
While sloth seduces more, too weak to bear  
The insupportable fatigue of thought,

And swallowing therefore, without pause or choice,  
The total grist unsifted, husks and all  
But trees, and rivulets whose rapid course  
Defies the check of winter, haunts of deer,  
And sheepwalks populous with bleating lambs,  
And lanes in which the primrose ere her time  
Peeps through the moss that clothes the hawthorn root,  
Deceive no student    Wisdom there, and Truth,  
Not shy as in the world, and to be won  
By slow solicitation, seize at once  
The roving thought, and fix it on themselves

#### THE POET IN THE WOODS

Here unmolested, through whatever sign  
The sun proceeds, I wander, neither mist,  
Nor freezing sky nor sultry, checking me,  
Nor stranger intermeddling with my joy  
Even in the spring and playtime of the year,  
That calls the unwonted villager abroad  
With all her little ones, a sportive train,  
To gather kingcups in the yellow mead,  
And prink their hair with daisies, or to pick  
A cheap but wholesome salad from the brook,  
These shades are all my own    The timorous hare,  
Grown so familiar with her frequent guest,  
Scarce shuns me, and the stockdove unalarmed  
Sits cooing in the pine-tree, nor suspends  
His long love-ditty for my near approach  
Drawn from his refuge in some lonely elm  
That age or injury has hollowed deep,  
Where on his bed of wool and matted leaves  
He has outslept the winter, ventures forth  
To frisk awhile, and bask in the warm sun,  
The squirrel, flippant, pert, and full of play  
He sees me, and at once, swift as a bird,  
Ascends the neighbouring beech, there whisks his brush,  
And perks his ears, and stamps and scolds aloud,  
With all the prettiness of feigned alarm,  
And anger insignificantly fierce.

## AN EPISTLE TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Dear Joseph,—Five and twenty years ago—  
 Alas, how time escapes!—'tis even so—  
 With frequent intercourse, and always sweet,  
 And always friendly we were wont to cheat  
 A tedious hour and now we never meet!  
 As some grave gentleman in Terence says  
 ('Twas therefore much the same in ancient days),  
 Good lack, we know not what to-morrow brings—  
 Strange fluctuation of all human things!  
 True. Changes will befall, and friends may part,  
 But distance only cannot change the heart  
 And were I called to prove the assertion true,  
 One proof should serve—a reference to you.

Whence comes it, then, that in the wane of life,  
 Though nothing have occurred to kindle strife,  
 We find the friends we fancied we had won  
 Though numerous once, reduced to few or none?  
 Can gold grow worthless, that has stood the touch?  
 No; gold they seemed, but they were never such.

Horatio's servant once, with bow and cringe,  
 Swinging the parlour door upon its hinge,  
 Dreading a negative, and overawed  
 Lest he should trespass, begged to go abroad.  
 Go, fellow!—whither?—turning short about—  
 Nay Stay at home—you're always going out.  
 'Tis but a step, sir just at the street's end.—  
 For what?—An please you, sir to see a friend.—  
 A friend! Horatio cried, and seemed to start—  
 'Yea marry shalt thou, and with all my heart.  
 And fetch my cloak for though the night be raw,  
 I'll see him too—the first I ever saw

I knew the man, and knew his nature mild,  
 And was his plaything often when a child;  
 But somewhat at that moment pinched him close,  
 Else he was seldom bitter or morose,  
 Perhaps, his confidence just then betrayed,  
 His grief might prompt him with the speech he made!

Perhaps 'twas mere good humour gave it birth,  
The harmless play of pleasantry and mirth  
Howe'er it was, his language, in my mind,  
Bespoke at least a man that knew mankind.

But not to moralize too much, and strain  
To prove an evil of which all complain,  
(I hate long arguments verbosely spun,)  
One story more, dear Hill, and I have done.  
Once on a time, an emperor, a wise man,  
No matter where, in China or Japan,  
Decreed, that whosoever should offend  
Against the well-known duties of a friend,  
Convicted once, should ever after wear  
But half a coat, and show his bosom bare  
The punishment importing this, no doubt,  
That all was naught within, and all found out

O happy Britain ! we have not to fear  
Such hard and arbitrary measure here ,  
Else, could a law like that which I relate  
Once have the sanction of our triple state,  
Some few that I have known in days of old,  
Would run most dreadful risk of catching cold ,  
While you, my friend, whatever wind should blow,  
Might traverse England safely to and fro,  
An honest man, close buttoned to the chin,  
Broadcloth without, and a warm heart within.

TO THE REV MR. NEWTON, ON HIS RETURN  
FROM RAMSGATE.

That ocean you of late surveyed,  
Those rocks, I too have seen,  
But I afflicted and dismayed,  
You tranquil and serene.

You from the flood-controlling steep  
Saw stretched before your view,  
With conscious joy, the threatening deep,  
No longer such to you.

To me the waves that ceaseless broke  
Upon the dangerous coast  
Hoarsely and ominously spoke  
Of all my treasure lost.

Your sea of troubles you have past,  
And found the peaceful shore  
I, tempest tossed, and wrecked at last,  
Come home to port no more.

ON THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE.—WRITTEN WHEN  
THE NEWS ARRIVED.

Toll for the brave !  
The brave that are no more !  
All sunk beneath the wave,  
Fast by their native shore !

Eight hundred of the brave,  
Whose courage well was tried,  
Had made the vessel heel,  
And laid her on her side.

A land breeze shook the shrouds,  
And she was overset ;  
Down went the Royal George,  
With all her crew complete.

Toll for the brave !  
Brave Kempenfelt is gone  
His last sea fight is fought  
His work of glory done.

It was not in the battle  
No tempest gave the shock  
She sprang no fatal leak  
She ran upon no rock.

His sword was in its sheath ,  
His fingers held the pen,  
When Kempenfelt went down  
With twice four hundred men

Weigh the vessel up,  
Once dreaded by our foes !  
And mingle with our cup  
The tears that England owes

Her timbers yet are sound,  
And she may float again  
Full charged with England's thunder,  
And plough the distant main.

But Kempenfelt is gone,  
His victories are o'er ,  
And he and his eight hundred  
Shall plough the wave no more.

#### EPITAPH ON A HARE.

Here lies, whom hound did ne'er pursue,  
Nor swifter greyhound follow,  
Whose foot ne'er tainted morning dew,  
Nor ear heard huntsman's halloo ,

Old Tiney, surliest of his kind,  
Who, nursed with tender care,  
And to domestic bounds confined,  
Was still a wild Jack hare.

Though duly from my hand he took  
His pittance every night,  
He did it with a jealous look,  
And, when he could, would bite.

His diet was of wheaten bread,  
And milk, and oats, and straw ;  
Thistles, or lettuces instead,  
With sand to scour his maw

On twigs of hawthorn he regaled,  
On pippins' russet peel,  
And, when his juicy salads failed,  
Sliced carrot pleased him well.  
A Turkey carpet was his lawn,  
Whereon he loved to bound,  
To skip and gambol like a fawn,  
And swing his rump around.  
His frisking was at evening hours,  
For then he lost his fear  
But most before approaching showers,  
Or when a storm drew near  
Eight years and five round rolling moons  
He thus saw steal away  
Dozing out all his idle noons,  
And every night at play  
I kept him for his humour's sake,  
For he would oft beguile  
My heart of thoughts that made it ache,  
And force me to a smile.  
But now beneath this walnut shade  
He finds his long last home,  
And waits, in snug concealment laid,  
Till gentler Puss shall come.  
He, still more aged, feels the shocks  
From which no care can save,  
And, partner once of Tinney's box,  
Must soon partake his grave.

ON THE DEATH OF MRS. THROCKMORTON'S BULLFINCH

Ye Nymphs, if e'er your eyes were red  
With tears o'er hapless favourites shed,  
Oh share Maria's grief!  
Her favourite, even in his cage  
(What will not hunger's cruel rage?)  
Assassinated by a thief.

Where Rhénus strays his vines among  
The egg was laid from which he sprung ;  
    And though by nature mute,  
Or only with a whistle blessed,  
Well-taught, he all the sounds expressed  
    Of flageolet or flute.

The honours of his ebon poll  
Were brighter than the sleekest mole,  
    His bosom of the hue  
With which Aurora decks the skies,  
When piping winds shall soon arise  
    To sweep away the dew

Above, below, in all the house,  
Dire foe alike of bird and mouse,  
    No cat had leave to dwell ,  
And Bully's cage supported stood  
On props of smoothest-shaven wood,  
    Large built and latticed well

Well latticed,—but the grate, alas !  
Not rough with wire of steel or brass,  
    For Bully's plumage sake,  
But smooth with wands from Ouse's side,  
With which, when neatly peeled and dried,  
    The swains their baskets make

Night veiled the pole , all seemed secure ,  
When, led by instinct sharp and sure,  
    Subsistence to provide,  
A beast forth sallied on the scout,  
Long backed, long tailed, with whiskered sno  
    And badger-coloured hide

He, entering at the study door,  
Its ample area 'gan explore ,  
    And something in the wind  
Conjectured, sniffing round and round,  
Better than all the books he found,  
    Food chiefly for the mind.

Just then, by adverse fate impressed,  
A dream disturbed poor Bully's rest ;  
In sleep he seemed to view  
A rat fast clinging to the cage,  
And screaming at the sad presage,  
Awoke and found it true.

For aided both by ear and scent,  
Right to his mark the monster went,—  
Ah, Muse! forbear to speak  
Minute the horrors that ensued ;  
His teeth were strong the cage was wood.—  
He left poor Bully's beak.

Oh, had he made that too his prey !  
That beak, whence issued many a lay  
Of such mellifluous tone,  
Might have repaid him well, I wote,  
For silencing so sweet a throat,  
Fast stuck within his own.

Maria weeps,—the Muses mourn —  
So, when by Bacchanallians torn,  
On Thracian Hebrus' side  
The tree-enchanted Orpheus fell,  
His head alone remained to tell  
The cruel death he died.

#### THE ACQUIESCENCE OF PURE LOVE

[From the French of Madame Guyon.]

Love! if Thy destined sacrifice am I  
Come, slay thy victim, and prepare Thy fires ;  
Plunged in the depths of mercy let me die  
The death which every soul that lives desires !  
I watch my hours, and see them fleet away  
The time is long that I have languished here  
Yet all my thoughts Thy purposes obey  
With no reluctance, cheerful and sincere.

To me 'tis equal, whether Love ordain  
My life or death, appoint me pain or ease :  
My soul perceives no real ill in pain ,  
In ease or health no real good she sees

One Good she covets, and that Good alone ;  
To choose Thy will, from selfish bias free ,  
And to prefer a cottage to a throne,  
And grief to comfort, if it pleases Thee.

That we should bear the cross is Thy command,  
Die to the world, and live to self no more ,  
Suffer, unmoved, beneath the rudest hand,  
As pleased when shipwrecked as when safe on shore.

#### ON THE RECEIPT OF MY MOTHER'S PICTURE.

Oh that those lips had language ! Life has passed  
With me but roughly since I heard thee last.  
Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smile I see,  
The same that oft in childhood solaced me ,  
Voice only fails, else how distinct they say,  
'Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away '  
The meek intelligence of those dear eyes  
(Blessed be the art that can immortalize,  
The art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim  
To quench it) here shines on me still the same.

Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,  
O welcome guest, though unexpected here !  
Who bidst me honour with an artless song,  
Affectionate, a mother lost so long,  
I will obey, not willingly alone,  
But gladly, as the precept were her own  
And, while that face renews my filial grief,  
Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief,  
Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,  
A momentary dream that thou art she.

My mother ! when I learnt that thou wast dead,  
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed ?

Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,  
Wretch even then life's journey just begun?  
Perhaps thou gavest me, though unfelt, a kiss:  
Perhaps a tear if souls can weep in bliss—  
Ah, that maternal smile! It answers—Yes.  
I heard the bell tolled on thy burial day  
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away  
And, turning from my nursery window drew  
A long long sigh, and wept a last adieu!  
But was it such?—It was.—Where thou art gone  
Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.  
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,  
The parting word shall pass my lips no more!  
Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my concern,  
Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.  
What ardently I wished I long believed,  
And, disappointed still, was still deceived.  
By expectation every day beguiled,  
Dupe of *to-morrow* even from a child.  
Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,  
Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent,  
I learned at last submission to my lot  
But, though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot.  
Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,  
Children not thine have trod my nursery floor  
And where the gardener Robin day by day  
Drew me to school along the public way  
Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapped  
In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet capped,  
'Tis now become a history little known,  
That once we called the pastoral house our own.  
Short lived possession! but the record fair  
That memory keeps, of all thy kindness there,  
Still outlives many a storm that has effaced  
A thousand other themes less deeply traced.  
Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,  
That thou mightst know me safe and warmly laid  
Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,  
The biscuit, or confectionary plum

The fragrant waters on my cheek bestowed  
By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glowed,  
All this, and more endearing still than all,  
Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall,  
Ne'er roughened by those cataracts and braves  
That humour interposed too often makes,  
All this still legible in memory's page,  
And still to be so to my latest age,  
Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pry  
Such honours to thee as my numbers may,  
Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,  
Not scorned in heaven, though little noticed here

Could Time, his flight reversed, restore the hours,  
When, playing with thy vesture's tissue flowers,  
The violet, the pink, and jessamine,  
I pricked them into paper with a pin  
(And thou wast happier than myself the while,  
Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head and smile),  
Could those few pleasant days again appear,  
Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here?  
I would not trust my heart—the dear delight  
Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might —  
But no—what here we call our life is such  
So little to be loved, and thou so much,  
That I should ill requite thee to constrain  
Thy unbound spirit into bonds again

Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast  
(The storms all weathered and the ocean crossed)  
Shoots into port at some well-havened isle,  
Where spices breathe, and brighter seasons smile,  
There sits quiescent on the floods that show  
Her beauteous form reflected clear below,  
While airs impregnated with incense play  
Around her, fanning light her streamers gay;  
So thou, with sails how swift ' hast reached the shore,  
'Where tempests never beat nor billows roar'  
And thy loved consort on the dangerous tide  
Of life long since has anchored by thy side.  
But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,  
Always from port withheld, always distressed—

Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest tost,  
Sails ripped, seams opening wide, and compass lost,  
And day by day some current's thwarting force  
Sets me more distant from a prosperous course.  
Yet, oh, the thought that thou art safe and he!  
That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.  
My boast is not, that I deduce my birth  
From loins enthroned and rulers of the earth;  
But higher far my proud pretensions rise—  
The son of parents passed into the skies!  
And now, farewell—Time unrevoked has run  
His wonted course, yet what I wished is done.  
By contemplation's help, not sought in vain  
I seem to have lived my childhood o'er again  
To have renewed the joys that once were mine,  
Without the sin of violating thine  
And, while the wings of Fancy still are free,  
And I can view this mimic show of thee,  
Time has but half succeeded in his theft—  
Thyself removed, thy power to soothe me left.

## THE POPLAR FIELD

The poplars are felled; farewell to the shade,  
And the whispering sound of the cool colonnade;  
The winds play no longer and sing in the leaves,  
Nor Onse on his bosom their image receives.

Twelve years have elapsed since I first took a view  
Of my favourite field, and the bank where they grew;  
And now in the grass behold they are laid,  
And the tree is my seat that once lent me a shade!

The blackbird has fled to another retreat,  
Where the hazels afford him a screen from the heat,  
And the scene where his melody charmed me before  
Resounds with his sweet flowing ditty no more.

My fugitive years are all hasting away,  
 And I must ere long lie as lowly as they,  
 With a turf on my breast, and a stone at my head,  
 Ere another such grove shall arise in its stead.

'Tis a sight to engage me, if anything can,  
 To muse on the perishing pleasures of man,  
 Though his life be a dream, his enjoyments, I see,  
 Have a being less durable even than he.<sup>1</sup>

### TO MARY

The twentieth year is well-nigh past,  
 Since first our sky was overcast,  
 Ah, would that this might be the last!  
My Mary!

Thy spirits have a fainter flow,  
 I see thee daily weaker grow,  
 'Twas my distress that brought thee low,  
My Mary!

Thy needles, once a shining store,  
 For my sake restless heretofore,  
 Now rust disused, and shine no more,  
My Mary!

For though thou gladly wouldst fulfil  
 The same kind office for me still,  
 Thy sight now seconds not thy will,  
My Mary!

But well thou playedst the housewife's part,  
 And all thy threads with magic art  
 Have wound themselves about this heart,  
My Mary!

<sup>1</sup> *Note to Ed of 1803* Mr Cowper afterwards altered the last stanza in the following manner —

'The change both my heart and my fancy employs,  
 I reflect on the frailty of man and his joys,  
 Short lived as we are, yet our pleasures, we see,  
 Have a still shorter date, and die sooner than we.'

Thy indistinct expressions seem  
Like language uttered in a dream;  
Yet me they charm, whate'er the theme,  
My Mary!

Thy silver locks, once auburn bright,  
Are still more lovely in my sight  
Than golden beams of orient light.  
My Mary!

For could I view nor them nor thee,  
What sight worth seeing could I see?  
The sun would rise in vain for me,  
My Mary!

Partakers of thy sad decline,  
Thy hands their little force resign;  
Yet, gently prest, press gently mine,  
My Mary!

Such feebleness of limbs thou provest,  
That now at every step thou movest  
Upheld by two, yet still thou lovest,  
My Mary!

And still to love, though prest with ill,  
In wintry age to feel no chill,  
With me is to be lovely still,  
My Mary!

But ah! by constant heed I know,  
How oft the sadness that I show  
Transforms thy smiles to looks of woe,  
My Mary!

And should my future lot be cast  
With much resemblance of the past,  
Thy worn-out heart will break at last,  
My Mary!

## THE CASTAWAY

Obscurest night involved the sky,  
The Atlantic billows roared,  
When such a destined wretch as I,  
Washed headlong from on board,  
Of friends, of hope, of all bereft,  
His floating home for ever left

No braver chief could Albion boast  
Than he with whom he went,  
Nor ever ship left Albion's coast  
With warmer wishes sent  
He loved them both, but both in vain,  
Nor him beheld, nor her again

Not long beneath the whelming brine,  
Expert to swim, he lay,  
Nor soon he felt his strength decline,  
Or courage die away,  
But waged with death a lasting strife.  
Supported by despair of life.

He shouted nor his friends had failed  
To check the vessel's course,  
But so the furious blast prevailed,  
That, pitiless perforce,  
They left their outcast mate behind,  
And scudded still before the wind.

Some succour yet they could afford;  
And such as storms allow,  
The cask, the coop, the floated cord,  
Delayed not to bestow  
But he (they knew) nor ship nor shore,  
Whate'er they gave, should visit more.

Nor, cruel as it seemed, could he  
Their haste himself condemn  
Aware that flight, in such a sea,  
Alone could rescue them ;  
Yet bitter felt it still to die  
Deserted, and his friends so nigh.

He long survives, who lives an hour  
In ocean, self upheld  
And so long he, with unspent power  
His destiny repelled ;  
And ever as the minutes flew  
Entreated help, or cried 'Adieu !

At length, his transient respite past,  
His comrades, who before  
Had heard his voice in every blast,  
Could catch the sound no more  
For then, by toil subdued, he drank  
The stifling wave, and then he sank.

No poet wept him ; but the page  
Of narrative sincere,  
That tells his name, his worth his age,  
Is wet with Anson's tear  
And tears by bards or heroes shed  
Allike immortalize the dead.

I therefore purpose not, or dream,  
Descanting on his fate,  
To give the melancholy theme  
A more enduring date  
But misery still delights to trace  
Its semblance in another's case.

No voice divine the storm allayed  
No light propitious shone,  
When, snatched from all effectual aid,  
We perished, each alone  
But I beneath a rougher sea,  
And whelmed in deeper gulfs than he.



example; in fact Ramsay speaks of himself as the poetical disciple of one of the most notable of them, William Hamilton of Gilbertfield, a gay boisterous lieutenant who is supposed to have left a picture of himself in the song *Willie was a wanton wag*. There was another William Hamilton in the set, Hamilton of Bangour, whose songs were of a more serious cast. The mournful ballad of *The Fraes of Larrow* is his composition. Another of Ramsay's ingenious young gentlemen was Robert Crawford, of Drumsay who found words for the air of *Tweedside* which have become inseparable from that tender melody. David Mallet, who claimed to be the author of *Fidra and Emma*, made his beginning in letters as the author of *The Birks of Invermay* a pastoral song which has kept its place among less artificial favourites. Lady Grissell Baillie daughter of the Earl of Marchmont, also contributed to the *Tea Table Miscellany*. The humour of the song *Here na my heart licht* as well as the subject, is one among many illustrations of the closeness of the sympathy between the Scotch aristocracy and the peasantry. Perhaps the example of the Stuart kings had something to do with establishing this tradition. The first and the fifth of the line had a pronounced liking for putting the humours of the vulgar into verse.

Very little of real worth, however, was produced by Allan Ramsay's group. Their sentiment is affected, smirking lackadaisical and their humour except when it takes the form of description, facititious and forced. Very few of the songs of the *Tea Table Miscellany* took any lasting hold of the people—a sure proof of their artificiality. Historically they are the result of studies in Restoration and Queen Anne literature, with selections from which the productions of the native poets challenged competition in the *Miscellany* and we seem to be aware in reading them of a certain consciousness of imitation and pride of rivalry. The authors seem to have one eye on their subject and another on their models. There is much less of this in the writings of a somewhat later Northern group of singers, whether from temperament or because they were farther from the Modern Athens and its ambitions. The songs of George Halket, a Jacobite schoolmaster, author of *Whirry Whigs, awa'*, and *Logie o' Buchan*; Alexander Ross, the author of *The Fortunate Shepherdess*, a 'stickit Minister and for fifty two years a schoolmaster contented and tuneful on his stipend of twenty pounds a year; John Skinner the author of *Tullochgorum*, a persecuted Episcopalian clergyman

in Aberdeenshire, and Alexander Geddes, a Roman Catholic priest in Morayshire,—the songs of these local poets were more spontaneous, and proved themselves to have a correspondingly greater vitality. Of Skinner's songs in particular, few in number but all real in their impulse, full of verve and manly strength of heart and intellect, Burns was an ardent admirer. In one of those complimentary epistles which it was the fashion of the day for poets to interchange, Burns regretted that he had not been able to pay in person 'a younger brother's dutiful respect to the author of the best Scotch song Scotland ever saw—*Tullochgorum's my delight*' and hailed Skinner as the sole surviving possessor of that 'certain something' which to his mind distinguished old Scotch songs 'not only from English songs but from the modern efforts of song-wrights, in our native manner and language.' Burns was also much struck with the pathos of *The Ewie wi' the Crookit Horn*, he would have seen another quality in it if he had been in the secret, preserved by tradition, that the Ewie lamented was a whisky still captured by the exciseman, but the fact that to any one not in this secret the lament should have seemed so natural and touching, is an evidence of the delicacy with which the humorous double-meaning is sustained.

Burns was perhaps prejudiced by the direct unaffected strength of Skinner's songs, and the large-hearted philosophy of life which inspired them, into paying him a compliment that the technical excellence of his verse hardly warrants. Among Burns's contemporaries there were certainly others besides Skinner who possessed the secret of the certain indescribable something which makes a song a permanent addition to popular literature. Burns himself speaks of one of the most enduring of Scotch songs, *There's nae luck about the house*, which was first sung upon the streets and sold in a broadsheet about 1771 or 1772, as 'one of the most beautiful songs in the Scots or any other language.' It is still one of the mainstays and props of homely sentiment in Scotland. Its authorship is uncertain, but the weight of evidence assigns it to a poor school-mistress, Jean Adams, who closed an unfortunate career in an almshouse. Another song of equally enduring qualities, *Auld Robin Gray*, which became popular about the same date, was believed for some time by antiquaries to be as old as the time of David Rizzio, but proved to be the work of a girl hardly out of her teens, Lady Ann Lindsay, daughter of the Earl of Balcarres. The same mistake of ascribing popular songs to remote antiquity

made in the case of *Ca the Jowes to the Knowes* a pastoral in a very different key of sentiment, which was really written Isabel, or Tibbie, Pagan an Ayshire cottager, described as an an of deformed person, saturnine temper, and dissolute habits, ered formidable by her sarcastic wit and attractive by her powers of song. Two plaintive songs, to the air of *The Flowers of the Forest*, were from the first assigned to their true authors, Miss Jane Elliot, sister of the Sir Gilbert Elliot who afterwards became Lord Minto, and Miss Rutherford, afterwards Mrs. Cockburn, daughter of a Roxburghshire laird. Mrs. Cockburn's version had reference to a contemporary commercial disaster of the same nature as the Glasgow Bank failure but both have become associated in the popular mind with the defeat of Flodden. This may have contributed to their popularity, but the strength of their appeal to the melancholy romantic side of the Scotch character would probably have alone sufficed to preserve them. To the same period belongs the marching song of the 42nd Regiment, *The Garb of Old Gaul*. This stirring martial lyric was first printed in *The Lark*, a miscellany published in Edinburgh in 1765 and was the composition of a young officer Harry Erskine, who afterwards entered political life, and whose son was promoted to the peerage as Earl of Rosslyn.

I have drawn attention to the various social positions of the song writers of that period, to whom we owe the best and most enduring Scotch songs, the songs which have taken most hold of the people, and have moulded their character in order to show how universal was the passion for song writing in the eighteenth century. If we turn to the productions of less happy faculty the works of ambition and ingenious endeavour, we find abundant evidence of the same fact. Before Burns the lyric tendency is everywhere conspicuous, and naturally after Burns it increased for a time rather than abated. We have seen that Sir Gilbert Elliot's sister was a successful song writer; the diplomatist and statesman himself in his youth contributed a pastoral to Yair's *Charmers*, *My Sheep I neglected—I lost my sheep-hook*, in which he vowed to 'wander from love and Amynta no more.' This pastoral still holds its place in collections of Scotch songs. Andrew Erskine, a younger brother of the Earl of Kellie, wrote many songs, and one, *How sweet this lone vale* which Burns pronounced 'divine.' Sir John Clerk, a Baron of the Exchequer did not consider it beneath his dignity to put tags to old songs, and words in his native dialect

to old tunes Dr Austin, a fashionable physician in Edinburgh, consoled himself for the loss of a lady who jilted him in a song which has supported many in similar circumstances, *For Lack of Gold*. Alexander Wilson, who afterwards attained fame as an ornithologist, began life as a pedlar and strung breezy lyrics together as he wandered on cheerfully from door to door with his pack on his back. 'Balloon' Tytler—so called from his aeronautic experiments—chemist, mechanician, original editor and principal compiler of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, showed in *Loch Erroch Side*, and *The Bonnie Brucket Lassie*, that scientific pursuits had not dimmed his freshness of feeling. Blind Dr Blacklock, who kept a boarding-school, warbled 'in the manner of Shenstone,' about the harvest that waves in the breeze and the music that floats on the gale. Richard Hewitt, Blacklock's amanuensis, emulated the work of his master in the same vein. The famous song, *Hey Johnnie Cope*, which deserves to be ranked among the best songs of the period, was the composition of Adam Skirving, a wealthy Haddingtonshire farmer. John Lowe, a gardener's son, wrote *Mary, weep no more for me*. John Mayne, a compositor, wrote *Logan Braes*. A song-writer of wider culture was the Rev John Logan, Minister of Leith, the writer of the most eloquent sermons which the Scotch Church has produced. It is difficult in reading Logan's poetry to divest oneself of sympathy with the story of his unhappy life, but there seems to be more in his verse than mere general literary facility. He was a writer of sacred as well as 'profane' songs, but his essays in the latter direction, though they disturbed his relations with his brethren, help to redeem the Ministers of the Scotch Kirk from the reproach of having contributed less than any other class in the community to the national lyric movement of the eighteenth century.

W MINTO

## TULLOCHGORUM

[JOHN SATTNER. Born 1721; died 1801]

Come gie's a sang Montgomery cried,  
 And lay your disputes all aside,  
 What signifies't for folk to chide

For what's been done before them?

Let Whig and Tory all agree,  
 Whig and Tory, Whig and Tory  
 Let Whig and Tory all agree,

To drop their Whig mig morum;

Let Whig and Tory all agree  
 To spend the night in mirth and glee  
 And cheerfu sing along wi me,

The reel o Tullochgorum.

O Tullochgorum's my delight,  
 It gars us a in ane unite

And ony sump that keeps up spite,

In conscience I abhor him.

For blythe and cheery we's be a,  
 Blythe and cheery blythe and cheery  
 Blythe and cheery we's be a,

And mak' a happy quorum.

For blythe and cheery we's be a  
 As lang as we hae breath to draw  
 And dance, till we be like to fa,

The reel of Tullochgorum.

There needs na be sae grent a phrase,  
 Wi' dringing dull Italian lays,  
 I wadna gie our ain strathspeys

For half a hundred score o em.

They're douff<sup>2</sup> and dowie<sup>3</sup> at the best,  
 Douff and dowie, douff and dowie,  
 They're douff and dowie at the best

Wi a their variorum.

<sup>2</sup> morose person.

dull.

gloomy

They're douff and dowie at the best,  
 Their allegros and a' the rest,  
 They canna please a Scottish taste,  
 Compar'd wi' Tullochgorum

Let warldly minds themselves oppress  
 Wi' fears of want, and double cess,  
 And sullen sots themselves distress  
 Wi' keeping up decorum  
 Shall we sae sour and sulky sit,  
 Sour and sulky, sour and sulky,  
 Shall we sae sour and sulky sit,  
 Like auld Philosophorum?  
 Shall we so sour and sulky sit,  
 Wi' neither sense, nor mirth, nor wit,  
 Nor ever rise to shake a fit  
 To the reel of Tullochgorum?

May choicest blessings still attend  
 Each honest open-hearted friend,  
 And calm and quiet be his end,  
 And a' that's good watch o'er him!  
 May peace and plenty be his lot,  
 Peace and plenty, peace and plenty,  
 May peace and plenty be his lot,  
 And dainties a great store o' 'em,  
 May peace and plenty be his lot,  
 Unstam'd by any vicious spot!  
 And may he never want a groat  
 That's fond of Tullochgorum.

But for the dirty, yawning fool,  
 Who wants to be oppression's tool,  
 May envy gnaw his rotten soul,  
 And discontent devour him!  
 May dool and sorrow be his chance,  
 Dool and sorrow, dool and sorrow,  
 May dool and sorrow be his chance  
 And nane say wae's me for 'im!

May dool and sorrow be his chance,  
 Wif a' the ills that come frae France,  
 Whac'er he be, that winna dance  
 The reel of Tullochgorum.

LOGIE O' BUCHAN

[GEORGE HALEY Died 1756.]

O Logie o' Buchan, O Logie the laird,  
 They ha'e taen awa Jamie, that delved in the yard,  
 Wha play'd on the pipe, and the viol sae sma  
 They ha'e ta'en awa Jamie, the flow'r o' them a

He said, Think na lang lassie, tho' I gang awa ;  
 He said, Think na lang lassie, tho' I gang awa ;  
 For simmer is coming, cauld winter's awa,  
 And I'll come and see thee in spite of them a

Tho' Sandy has ousen<sup>1</sup>, has gear and has kye ;  
 A house, and a hadden<sup>2</sup>, and ailler forbye  
 Yet I'd tak' my ain lad, wi his staff in his hand,  
 Before I'd hae him, wi the houses and land.

My daddie looks sulky, my minnie looks sour,  
 They frown upon Jamie because he is poor ;  
 Tho' I lo'e them as weel as a daughter should do,  
 They're nae half sa dear to me, Jamie, as you.

I sit on my creepie<sup>3</sup>, I spin at my wheel,  
 And think on the laddie that lo'ed me sae weel ;  
 He had but ae saxpence, he brak it in twa,  
 And gied me the hauf o't when he gad awa

Then haste ye back, Jamie, and bide na awa  
 Then haste ye back, Jamie, and bide na awa,  
 The simmer is coming, cauld winter's awa,  
 And ye'll come and see me in spite o' them a

<sup>1</sup> oxen

<sup>2</sup> land (holding)

<sup>3</sup> low stool.

## LEWIE GORDON

[ALFAXANDER GEDDIE: Born 1737, died 1802]

Oh! send Lewie Gordon hame  
 And the lad I daurna' name,  
 Although his back be at the wa',  
 Here's to him that's far awa'

Hech hey! my Highlandman!  
 My handsome, charming Highlandman!  
 Weel could I my true love ken,  
 Amang ten thousand Highlandmen

Oh, to see his tartan trews,  
 Bonnet blue and laigh-heel'd shoes,  
 Philabeg aboon his knee!  
 That's the lad that I'll gang wi'

This lovely lad of whom I sing,  
 Is fitted for to be a king,  
 And on his breast he wears a star,  
 You'd take him for the god of war

Oh, to see this princely one  
 Seated on his father's throne!  
 Our griefs would then a' disappear,  
 We'd celebrate the jub'lee year

## THERE'S NAE LUCK ABOUT THE HOUSE

[JEAN ADAMS Died 1765]

And are ye sure the news is true?  
 And are ye sure he's weel?  
 Is this a time to think of wark?  
 Ye jauds, fling by your wheel.  
 Is this a time to think o' wark.  
 When Colin's at the door?  
 Gie me my cloak! I'll to the quay  
 And see him come ashore.

For there's nae luck about the house,  
 There's nae luck awa;  
 There's little pleasure in the house,  
 When our gudeman's awa.

Rise up and mak' a clean fireside;  
 Put on the muckle pot  
 Gie little Kate her cotton gown,  
 And Jock his Sunday coat  
 And mak' their shoon as black as slaes,  
 Their hose as white as snaw  
 It's a to please my ain gudeman,  
 For he's been long awa

There's twa fat hens upon the bank<sup>1</sup>,  
 Been fed this month and mair;  
 Mak' haste and thraw<sup>2</sup> their necks about,  
 That Colin weel may fare;  
 And mak' the table neat and clean,  
 Gar ilka thing look braw;  
 It's a for love of my gudeman,  
 For he's been long awa

O gie me down my bigonet<sup>3</sup>  
 My blsop satin gown,  
 For I maun tell the balhe's wife  
 That Colin's come to town.  
 My Sunday's shoon they maun gae on,  
 My hose o' pearlin blue;  
 'Tis a to please my ain gudeman,  
 For he's balth leal and true

Sae true his words, sae smooth his speech,  
 His breath's like caller air!  
 His very foot has music in't,  
 As he comes up the stair  
 And will I see his face again?  
 And will I hear him speak?  
 I'm downright dizzy with the thought —  
 In troth, I'm like to greet<sup>4</sup>

cross-beam (bank). wing    <sup>1</sup> linen cap.    <sup>2</sup> fresh.    weep

The cauld blasts o' the winter wind,  
 That thrilled through my heart,  
 They're a' blawn by, I ha'e him safe,  
 Till death we'll never part  
 But what puts parting in my head?  
 It may be far awa',  
 The present moment is our ain,  
 The neist we never saw.

Since Colin's weel, I'm weel content,  
 I ha'e nae more to crave,  
 Could I but live to mak' him blest,  
 I'm blest above the lave<sup>1</sup>  
 And will I see his face again?  
 And will I hear him speak?  
 I'm downright dizzy wi' the thought,—  
 In troth, I'm like to greet.

### CA' THE YOWES.

[ISABEL PAGAN Born 1740, died 1821]

Ca' the yowes to the knowes<sup>2</sup>,  
 Ca' them whare the heather grows,  
 Ca' them whare the burnie rows<sup>3</sup>,  
 My bonnie dearie.

As I gaed down the water side,  
 There I met my shepherd lad,  
 He rowed me sweetly in his plaid,  
 And he ca'd me his dearie.

Will ye gang down the water side,  
 And see the waves sae sweetly glide  
 Beneath the hazels spreading wide,  
 The moon it shines fu' clearly.

<sup>1</sup> the rest

<sup>2</sup> knolls.

<sup>3</sup> rolls

I was bred up at nae sic school,  
 My shepherd lad, to play the fool  
 And a the day to sit in dool,  
 And naebody to see me.

Ye shall get gowns and ribbons meet,  
 Caul leather shoon upon your feet,  
 And in my arms ye'le lie and sleep  
 And ye shall be my dearie.

If ye'll but stand to what ye've said,  
 I'le gang w<sup>th</sup> you, my shepherd lad;  
 And ye may row me in your plaid,  
 And I shall be your dearie.

While waters wimple to the sea,  
 While day blinks in the lift sae hie  
 Till clay-could death shall blin my e'e  
 Ye aye shall be my dearie.

### THE FLOWERS OF THE FOREST.

[JAMES ELLIOT Born 1727 died 1806.]

I've heard them liltin' at our ewe-milking,  
 Lassies a liltin', before the dawn of day;  
 But now they are moaning on lika green loanin'<sup>1</sup>;  
 The Flowers of the Forest are a weede away

At bughts<sup>2</sup> in the morning nae blythe lads are scorning;  
 The lassies are lanely and dowie, and wae  
 Nae daffing nae gabbling but sighing and sabbing,  
 Ilk ane lifts her leglin and hies her away

In halret<sup>3</sup> at the shearing nae youths now are jeering,  
 The bandsters<sup>7</sup> are lyart<sup>6</sup> and runckled and gray  
 At fair or at preaching nae wooing nae fleeching<sup>8</sup>—  
 The Flowers of the Forest are a weede away

A loaning is a grass path through corn fields for the use of the cattle.  
 sheep-pens.      toasting      <sup>6</sup> jesting      pail.      harvest.  
 men who bind up the sheaves.      hoary      <sup>8</sup> coaxing.

At e'en, in the gloaming, nae swankies<sup>1</sup> are roaming  
 'Bout stacks wi' the lasses at boyle to play,  
 But ilk ane sits eerie, lamenting her dearie—  
 The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

Dool and wae for the order sent our lads to the Border!  
 The English, for aince, by guile wan the day,  
 The Flowers of the Forest, that fought aye the foremost,  
 The prime of our land, lie cauld in the clay

We'll hear nae more liting at our ewe milking,  
 Women and burns are heartless and wae,  
 Sighing and mourning on ill a green morning,  
 The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away

### LOGAN BRAES

[JOHN MANNIE Born 1759, died 1836]

By Logan's streams that rin sae deep  
 Fu' aft, wi' glee, I've herded sheep,  
 I've herded sheep, or gather'd slaes,  
 Wi' my dear lad, on Logan braes  
 But wae's my heart! thae days are gane,  
 And fu' o' grief I herd alane,  
 While my dear lad maun face his face,  
 Far, far frae me and Logan braes

Nae mair, at Logan kirk, will he,  
 Atween the preachings, meet wi' me—  
 Meet wi' me, or when it's mirk,  
 Convoy me hame frae Logan kirk.  
 I weel may sing thae days are gane—  
 Frae kirk and fair I come alane,  
 While my dear lad maun face his face,  
 Far, far frae me and Logan braes!

At e'en, when hope amaist is gane,  
 I dander<sup>2</sup> dowie and forlane,  
 Or sit beneath the trysting-tree,  
 Where first he spak of love to me

<sup>1</sup> strapping lads

<sup>2</sup> loiter

O I cou'd I see thae days again,  
 My lover skalthless, and my ain;  
 Rever'd by friends, and far frae faes,  
 We'd live in bliss on Logan braes.

## FOR LACK OF GOLD.

[ADAM AUSTIN M.D. Born 1726? died 1774.]

For lack of gold she's left me, O,  
 And of all that's dear bereft me, O;  
 She me forsook for Athole's duke  
     And to endless woo she has left me, O  
 A star and garter have more art  
 Than youth, a true and faithful heart  
 For empty titles we must part,  
     And for glittering show she's left me, O  
 No cruel fair shall ever move  
 My injur'd heart again to love;  
 Through distant climates I must rove;  
     Since Jeany she has left me, O.  
 Ye powers above, I to your care  
 Give up my faithless, lovely fair;  
 Your choicest blessings be her share  
     Though she's for ever left me, O.

JOHNNIE COPE<sup>1</sup>

[ADAM SKIRVING. Born 1719; died 1803.]

Cope sent a challenge frae Dunbar —  
 Charlie, meet me an ye daur  
 And I'll learn you the art o' war,  
     If you'll meet wi' me P the mornin'.  
     Hey Johnnie Cope, are ye wauking yet?  
     Or are your drums a beating yet?  
     If ye were wauking, I wad wait  
     To gang to the coals i' the morning

<sup>1</sup> The reader need hardly be reminded that Sir John Cope commanded the English forces at Preston Pans, and was defeated by the Young Pretender

When Charlie look'd the letter upon,  
 He drew his sword the scabbard from.  
 Come follow me, my merry merry men,  
 And we'll meet Johnnie Cope in the morning

Now, Johnnie, be as good's your word,  
 Come let us try both fire and sword,  
 And dinna flee away like a frightened bird,  
 That's chased from its nest in the morning

When Johnnie Cope he heard of this,  
 He thought it wadna be amiss,  
 To ha'e a horse in readiness,  
 To flee awa' in the morning

Oy now, Johnnie, get up and rin,  
 The Highland bagpipes mak' a din,  
 It is best to sleep in a hale skin,  
 For 'twill be bluidy in the morning

When Johnnie Cope to Dunbar came,  
 They speer'd at him, Where's a' your men?  
 The deil confound me gin I ken,  
 For I left them a' i' the morning

Now, Johnnie, troth ye are na blate<sup>1</sup>,  
 To come wi' the news o' your ain defeat,  
 And leave your men in sic a strait,  
 Sae early in the morning

Oh! faith, quo' Johnnie, I got sic flegs<sup>2</sup>  
 Wi' their claymores and philabegs,  
 If I face them again, deil break my legs—  
 So I wish you a' gude morning

<sup>1</sup> shy<sup>2</sup> fears.

## ROBERT FERGUSSON

[ROBERT FERGUSSON was born in Edinburgh 11th September 1726. At the end of his Arts course at St. Andrews he was forced by the death of his father and the poverty of his mother to accept a miserable post as wryter clerk, the monotonous drudgery of which he varied by the composition of his poems and by some slight excesses, which were fatal to a feeble constitution. Mania supervened upon illness, and he died in lunatic asylum 16th October 1774. His contributions to the *Weekly Magazine*, 1771 made him famous. His poems were collected in a small volume in 1772.]

Fergusson is an interesting figure in the literary history of his country as an instance of precocious poetical talent, and as a link between his predecessor Ramsay and his mightier successor Burns. His fame is indissolubly associated with that of Burns, not only because Burns erected a monument over his grave, and inscribed on it one of those rapturous eulogies which the mention of Fergusson's name always called forth from him, but still more because of the extraordinary flattery which Burns bestowed upon him by imitating him almost as often and as much as he surpassed him. Specimens of Burns' prentice hand are preserved in the larger editions of his works. But they are few in number as well as of slender significance in regard to the possibilities of his genius. It was the reading of Fergusson's poems, as himself tells us, which moved him to resume his wildly sounding lyre, when in his early manhood he had for a time laid it aside. The same influence which recalled him to the service of the Muses dictated to a surprising extent the choice and the treatment of his themes throughout his poetical career, and certainly during its most fertile period. So many of his best known pieces, like *The Holy Fair* *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, his epistles and satires, bear obvious traces of having been suggested by his youthful predecessor's slender volume of song, that it is as if Burns, solitary genius in other respects, were solitary also in this respect—that his *juvenilia* were not written by his own hand, but by a poetical predecessor still more pre-

cocious than himself Fergusson's achievements in verse are the starting-points of Burns' triumphs He who opens Fergusson's volume in the expectation of finding another Burns is destined to be disappointed. But he is likely to be consoled for this disappointment by the discovery that not a few of the marked qualities of the poetry of the later singer characterise, as if in immature form, the verse of his predecessor There are present in the poems of each the same easy artless versification, the same love of nature and of human nature, the same humour, the same philosophy of common sense applied to social life, the same lively imagination, only what is ripe incomparable genius in the one is no more than precocious and surprising talent in the other. In this light it is fair to Fergusson as well as to Burns, and not injurious to the reputation of the younger poet, to compare *Braid Claith* (p 505) with *The Epistle to a Young Friend*, or the *Ode to the Gowdswink* with *The Mouse* or *The Mountain Daisy* Between Burns and his predecessor too there is this link of connection—the English poems of the one are of as little account as those of the other

Precocity, which is usually a disease accompanying other diseases and symptomatic of them, from the first marked Fergusson for its own All through his school and university course he was sickly, gentle and amiable, surprisingly quick and clever, a prodigy destined to an early grave. At twenty-one he is the most famous Scotch poet of his day, and his poems, apart from some pastorals which had served the purpose of poetical exercises, are chiefly short pieces in which he celebrates the life which he knows best, that of an Edinburgh clerk, and the life which he loves best, that of country swains It is with much of the grace and gaiety of Horace growing old and mellow, secure of fame and wine and friendship and mastery of his art, that the starved young Edinburgh clerk sings of scenes of gaiety and mild dissipation, in which his part was more fatal to his health than discreditable to his character, and from these *noctes ambrosianae* turns to the farmer's ingle, and the frolic and innocent and healthy life of the denizens of meadows and uplands remote from towns As if he were old before his time, he is little inspired by the passion from which the Greek dramatist was happy to be delivered by age, and from which Burns had no wish ever to escape Similarly he is a city spark and a satirist of the city magistrates and the city guard, rather in the genial, reflective, humorous mood of the decline of life than with

the passionateness of youth. His range of subjects is narrowed by the narrow space of a career which began at twenty-one and was finished at twenty four. He had a keen enjoyment of city life, with its clubs for a little dissipation, and its ballies and its 'black banditti' for a constant occasion of laughter. Still more keen on his part was that enjoyment of the country, the pleasures of which he seldom tasted except in imagination, but which supplies the inspiration of some of his most touching verses, as well as of some of his admirable mock heroics. We alternate in his verse between these two sets of themes, and in his treatment of both we meet with the same vein of pure pathos, and its almost unfailing accompaniment of genuine humour.

JOHN SERVICE.

## THE DAFT DAYS.

[Corresponding in Scotland to Christmas holidays in England]

Now mirk<sup>1</sup> December's dowie<sup>2</sup> face  
 Glows<sup>3</sup> ower the rigs wi' sour grimace,  
 While, thro' his *minimum* of space,  
     The bleer-ey'd sun,  
 Wi' blinkin light and stealing pace,  
     His race doth run

From naked groves nae birdie sings;  
 To shepherd's pipe nae hillock rings,  
 The breeze nae od'rous flavour brings  
     From Borean cave,  
 And dwyning<sup>4</sup> Nature droops her wings,  
     Wi' visage grave.

Mankind but scanty pleasure glean  
 Frae snawy hill or barren plain,  
 Whan Winter, 'midst his nipping train,  
     Wi' frozen spear,  
 Sends drift ower a' his bleak domain,  
     And guides the weir<sup>5</sup>

Auld Reikie<sup>6</sup>! thou'rt the canty<sup>7</sup> hole,  
 A bield<sup>8</sup> for mony caldrife<sup>9</sup> soul,  
 Wha snugly at thine ingle loll,  
     Baith warm and couth<sup>10</sup>,  
 While round they gar the bicker<sup>11</sup> roll  
     To weet their mouth.

When merry Yule-day comes, I trow,  
 You'll scantlins find a hungry mou,  
 Sma' are our cares, our stamacks fu'  
     O' gusty gear<sup>12</sup>,  
 And kickshaws, strangers to our view,  
     Sin' fairn-year<sup>13</sup>.

dark    <sup>2</sup> gloomy    <sup>3</sup> stares    <sup>4</sup> failing    <sup>5</sup> war    <sup>6</sup> Edinburgh.  
 cheerful.    <sup>7</sup> shelter    <sup>8</sup> chilly,    <sup>10</sup> social.    <sup>11</sup> wooden goblet,  
     <sup>12</sup> full of wind.    <sup>13</sup> last year

Ye browster<sup>1</sup> wives! now busk ye bra,  
And fling your sorrows far awa;  
Then, come and gie's the tither blaw<sup>2</sup>

Of reaming<sup>3</sup> ale,  
Mair precious than the Well of Spa,  
Our hearts to heal.

Then, tho' at odds wi a the warl'  
Amang ourselfs we'll never quarrel;  
Tho' Discord gie a canker'd snarl  
To spoil our glee,

As lang's there a pith into the barrel  
We'll drink and 'gree.

Fiddlers! your pins<sup>4</sup> in temper fix,  
And roset<sup>5</sup> weel your fiddlesticks,  
But banish wile Italian tricks

From out your quorum,  
Nor *fortes* wi *pianos* mix—  
Gie's *Tullochgorum*<sup>6</sup>

For nought can cheer the hear' sae weel  
As can a canty Highland reel  
It even vivifies the heel

To skip and dance  
Lifeless is he wha canna feel  
Its influence.

Let mirth abound let social cheer  
Invest the dawning of the year;  
Let blithesome innocence appear  
To crown our joy;

Nor envy wi sarcastic sneer  
Our bliss destroy

And thou, great god of *agua villa*!  
Wha sways the empire of this city—  
When fou we're sometimes capernoity<sup>7</sup>—

Be thou prepar'd  
To hedge us frae that black handitt,  
The City Guard.

<sup>1</sup> brewer<sup>2</sup> jorum.<sup>3</sup> foaming.<sup>4</sup> pegs.<sup>5</sup> rosin.<sup>6</sup> Printed four years before Skinner's *Tullochgorum* (p. 491). <sup>7</sup> Ill-tempered

## BRAID CLAITH

Ye wha are fain to hae your name  
 Wro'e in the bonny book of fame,  
 Let merit nae pretension claim  
                     To laurel'd wreath,  
 But hap<sup>1</sup> ye weel, baith back and wame,  
                     In gude Braid Claith

He that some ells o' this may fa'<sup>2</sup>,  
 An' slae-black<sup>3</sup> hat on pow<sup>4</sup> like snaw,  
 Bids bauld<sup>5</sup> to bear the gree<sup>6</sup> awa',  
                     Wi' a' this graith<sup>7</sup>,  
 Whan bienly<sup>8</sup> clad wi' shell fu' braw  
                     O' gude Braid Claith

Waesuck for him wha has nae fek<sup>9</sup> o't<sup>1</sup>  
 For he's a gowk<sup>10</sup> they're sure to geck<sup>11</sup> at,  
 A chield that ne'er will be respektit  
                     While he draws breath,  
 Till his four quarters are bedeckit  
                     Wi' gude Braid Claith.

On Sabbath-days the barber spark,  
 Whan he has done wi' scrapin wark,  
 Wi' siller broachie in his sark<sup>12</sup>,  
                     Gangs trigly, faith!  
 Or to the Meadow or the Park,  
                     In gude Braid Claith

Weel might ye trow, to see them there,  
 That they to shave your haffits<sup>13</sup> bare,  
 Or curl an' sleek a pickle<sup>14</sup> hair,  
                     Wud be right laith<sup>15</sup>  
 When pacing wi' a gawsy<sup>16</sup> air<sup>16</sup>  
                     In gude Braid Claith.

<sup>1</sup> cover      <sup>2</sup> possess or deserve      <sup>3</sup> slae-black      <sup>4</sup> poll.      <sup>5</sup> bold  
<sup>6</sup> pre eminence      <sup>7</sup> accoutrements      <sup>8</sup> well      <sup>9</sup> quantity      <sup>10</sup> fool  
<sup>11</sup> toss the head      <sup>12</sup> shirt      <sup>13</sup> cheeks      <sup>14</sup> little      <sup>15</sup> loath.      <sup>16</sup> looking big

If ony mettled stirrah<sup>1</sup> grien<sup>2</sup>  
 For favour frae a lady's ean,  
 He mauna care for being seen  
     Before he sheath  
 His body in a scabbard clean  
     O gude Braid Claith.

For gin<sup>3</sup> he comes wi' coat thread bare,  
 A feg<sup>4</sup> for him she winna care,  
 But crook her bony mou' fu sair  
     An scald him baith.  
 Wooers shoud ay their travel<sup>5</sup> spare  
     Without Braid Claith.

Braid Claith lends fouk<sup>6</sup> an unco heese<sup>7</sup>  
 Makes mony kail worms butter flies,  
 Gies mony a doctor his degrees  
     For little skaith<sup>8</sup>  
 In short you may be what you please  
     Wi gude Braid Claith.

For thof ye had as wise a snout on,  
 As Shakespeare or Sir Isaac Newton  
 Your judgment fouk wud hao a doubt on,  
     I'll tak' my aith,  
 Till they could see ye wi' a suit on  
     O' gude Braid Claith.

#### FROM CALLER WATER.

Whan father Adie<sup>9</sup> first pat spade in  
 The bonny yeard<sup>10</sup> of antient Eden<sup>11</sup>  
 His amry<sup>12</sup> had nae liquor laid in,  
     To fire his mou'  
 Nor did he thole<sup>13</sup> his wife's upbraidin'  
     For being fou<sup>14</sup>

young fellow      <sup>1</sup> long for.      if      fig      trouble  
<sup>6</sup> folk.      <sup>7</sup> lift.      harm.      <sup>8</sup> Adam.      <sup>9</sup> earth.  
 Langsyne in Eden a bonny yard. — Burns      Address to the Deil  
     <sup>10</sup> cupboard.      <sup>11</sup> suffer.      <sup>12</sup> drunk.

A caller burn o' siller sheen,  
 Ran cannily out o'er the green,  
 And whan our gutcher's<sup>1</sup> drouth had been  
     To bide right sair,  
 He loutit<sup>2</sup> down and drank bedeen<sup>3</sup>  
     A dainty skair<sup>4</sup>

His bairns a' before the flood  
 Had langer tack<sup>5</sup> o' flesh and blood,  
 And on mair pithy shanks they stood  
     Than Noah's line,  
 Wha still hae been a feckless brood  
     Wi' drinking wine

The fuddlin' Bardies now-a-days  
 Rin maukin<sup>6</sup>-mad in Bacchus' praise,  
 And limp and stoiter<sup>7</sup> thro' their lays  
     Anacreontic,

While each his sea of wine displays  
     As big's the Pontic

My muse will no gang far frae hame,  
 Or scour a' airths<sup>8</sup> to hound for fame,  
 In troth, the jillet<sup>9</sup> ye might blame  
     For thinking on't,

Whan eithly<sup>10</sup> she can find the theme  
     Of *aqua font*.

This is the name that doctors use  
 Their patients' noddles to confuse,  
 Wi' simples clad in terms abstruse,  
     They labour still,

In kittle<sup>11</sup> words to gar your roose<sup>12</sup>  
     Their want o' skill

But we'll hae nae sick clitter-clatter,  
 And briefly to expound the matter,  
 It shall be ca'd good Caller Water,  
     Than whilk, I trow,  
 Few drops in doctors' shops are better  
     For me or you

<sup>1</sup> grandfather      <sup>2</sup> bent.      <sup>3</sup> hastily      <sup>4</sup> share      <sup>5</sup> lease.  
<sup>6</sup> hare      <sup>7</sup> stagger      <sup>8</sup> regions of sky or earth      <sup>9</sup> skittish damsel.  
<sup>10</sup> easily      <sup>11</sup> ticklish,      <sup>12</sup> praise,

Tho' joints are stiff as any rung<sup>1</sup>  
 Your plith wi' pain be fairly dung<sup>2</sup>,  
 Be you in Caller Water flung  
     Out o'er the lugs<sup>3</sup>  
 'Twill mak you souple, swack<sup>4</sup> and young,  
     Withouten drugs.

Tho' cholic or the heart scad teare us,  
 Or ony inward pain should seize us,  
 It masters a sic fell diseases  
     That would ye spulzie<sup>5</sup>  
 And brings them to a canny criss  
     Wi' little tulzie<sup>6</sup>

Wer't na for it the bonny lasses  
 Would glowr nae mair in keeking-glasses<sup>7</sup>  
 And soon tunc dint<sup>8</sup> o' a the graces  
     That aft convey  
 In gleefu looks and bonny faces,  
     To catch our ein.

The fairest then might die a maid,  
 And Cupid qut his shooting trade,  
 For wha thro' clarty<sup>9</sup> masquerade  
     Could then discover  
 Whether the features under shade  
     Were worth a lover?

#### ODE TO THE GOWDSPINK<sup>10</sup>

Frae fields where Spring her sweets has blawn  
 Wi' caller verdure o'er the lawn,  
 The gowdspink comes in new attire,  
 The brawest mang the whistling choir,  
 That, ere the sun can clear his ein,  
 Wi' glib notes sano<sup>11</sup> the summer's green.  
 Sure Nature herried<sup>12</sup> mony a tree,  
 For sprains<sup>13</sup> and bonny spats to thee;

<sup>1</sup> staff.      exhausted.      cars.      nimble.      <sup>5</sup> spoil  
     struggle.      looking-glasses.      <sup>6</sup> lose regard for      dirty  
<sup>10</sup> Goldfinch.      <sup>11</sup> bless.      <sup>12</sup> plundered.      <sup>13</sup> different coloured stripes.

Nae mair the rainbow can impart  
 Sic glowing ferlies<sup>1</sup> o' her art,  
 Whase pencil wrought its freats<sup>2</sup> at will  
 On thee the sey-piece<sup>2</sup> o' her still  
 Nae mair through straths in simmer dight  
 We seek the rose to bless our sight,  
 Or bid the bonny wa'-flowers sprout  
 On yonder Ruin's lofty snout  
 Thy shining garments far outstrip  
 The cherries upo' Hebe's lip,  
 And fool the tints that Nature chose  
 To busk and paint the crimson rose  
 'Mang men, wae's heart<sup>3</sup> we aften find  
 The brawest drest want peace of mind,  
 While he that gangs wi' ragged coat  
 Is weil contentit wi' his lot  
 Whan wand wi' glewy birdlime's set,  
 To steal far aff your dautit<sup>3</sup> mate,  
 Blyth wad ye change your cleething gray  
 In lieu of lav'rock's sober grey  
 In vain thro' woods you sair may ban  
 Th' envious treachery of man,  
 That, wi' your gowden glister ta'en,  
 Still haunts you on the simmer's plain  
 And traps you 'mang the sudden fa's<sup>4</sup>  
 O' winter's dreary dreepin' snaws  
 Now steekit<sup>5</sup> frae the gowany<sup>6</sup> field,  
 Frae ilka fav'rite houff<sup>7</sup> and bield,  
 But mergh<sup>8</sup>, alas! to disengage  
 Your bonny bouck<sup>9</sup> frae fettering cage,  
 Your free-born bosom beats in vain  
 For darling liberty again  
 In window hung, how aft we see  
 Thee keek<sup>10</sup> around at warblers free.  
 That carrol saft, and sweetly sing  
 Wi' a' the blythness of the spring?

vels	<sup>2</sup> trial-piece	<sup>3</sup> cherished	<sup>4</sup> snares	<sup>6</sup> shut.
ied.	<sup>7</sup> resort.	<sup>8</sup> without strength	<sup>9</sup> body	<sup>10</sup> look

Like Tantalus they bling you here  
 To spy the glories o' the year;  
 And tho' you're at the burnie's brink,  
 They douna' suffer you to drink.  
 Ah, Liberty! thou bonny dame,  
 How wildly wanton is thy stream,  
 Round whilk the birdies a rejoice,  
 An hail you wi' a gratefu' voice.  
 The gowdspink chatters joyous here,  
 And courts wi' gleesome sangs his peer:  
 The mavis frae the new bloom'd thorn  
 Begins his lauds at earest morn;  
 And herd lowns' loupin' o'er the grass,  
 Need far less fl etching till their lass,  
 Than paughty damsels bred at courts,  
 Wha throw their mou's and take the dorts.  
 But, rest of thee, fient' flee we care  
 For a that life ahint can spare.  
 The gowdspink, that sae lang has kend  
 Thy happy sweets (his wonted friend)  
 Her sad confinement ill can brook  
 In some dark chamber's dowy' nook;  
 Tho' Mary's hand his nebb' supplies,  
 Unkend to hunger's painfu' cries,  
 Ev'n beauty canna chear the heart  
 Frae life, frae liberty apart;  
 For now we tync' its wonted lay  
 Sae lightsome sweet, sae blythely gay  
 Thus Fortune aft a curse can gie,  
 To wyle us far frae liberty  
 Then tent<sup>10</sup> her syren smiles wha list,  
 I'll ne'er envy your ginals<sup>11</sup> grist;  
 For whan fair freedom smiles nae mair,  
 Care I for life? Shame fa the hair!<sup>12</sup>  
 A field oergrown wi' rankest stubble,  
 The essence of a paltry bubble.

cannot  
gloomy

lads.  
bill.

flattery  
lose.

<sup>4</sup> haughty  
<sup>10</sup> heed.

<sup>6</sup> huff.  
<sup>11</sup> box for meal.

devil a fly  
<sup>12</sup> where.

## ROBERT BURNS

[ROBERT BURNS was born 25th January, 1759, 'the hindmost year but ane' of George the Second's reign, in a cottage built by his father, two miles south of Ayr, and close to Alloway Kirk, that relic of nondescript architecture to which his genius has lent almost as world-wide an interest as that which makes Vaucuse a place of pilgrimage to all nations. Eldest son of William Burness, of a Kincardineshire family of small farmers, market gardener and overseer of a small estate in the neighbourhood of Ayr, and afterwards tenant of Lochlie and Mount Oliphant, small Ayrshire farms Burns received an education which ultimately included a sound acquaintance with English grammar, a little mathematics, mensuration, French, and a smattering of Latin. At work on his father's farm from an early age till he was twenty three, he tried then to establish himself in business as a flax-dresser in Irvine, but returned in a short time to his father's house with empty pockets and with a character hitherto blameless deteriorated by some new companionships. After the death of his father, a specimen of industry and integrity never rewarded in this life, his brother Gilbert and he took the farm of Mossiel near Mauchline (1784), which also turned out to be a bad bargain. To escape troubles in which his youthful and characteristic follies involved him, especially with the father of his future partner in life, 'Bonnie Jean,' he accepted an appointment to a clerkship in Jamaica, but on the point of starting on the voyage he had his footsteps turned towards Edinburgh by the success of his volume of poems (Kilmarnock, 1786), and by the patronage, literary and aristocratic, which it immediately secured for him. With the proceeds of a second edition of the volume (Edinburgh, 1787), amounting to £500 or £600, he established himself on the farm of Ellisland near Dumfries. Unsuccessful once more in this tenancy he became an exciseman to eke out his income, and finally in that capacity, unfortunately both for his health and for his reputation, removed to Dumfries, where he died in 1796.]

That admiration of Burns' poetry as the work of a ploughman, which Jeffrey in his time had occasion to deprecate, in which he could see no more sense than 'in admiring it as if it had been written with his toes,' has not survived Jeffrey's ridicule. Burns, like Joseph in Egypt, was destined to 'forget his toil and his father's house'. His right to a place among the greater poets of Europe being no longer in dispute, to speak of him still as 'the

Ayrshire bard is almost as dull an affectation as to follow his own example and call him Rob or Robin. A great poet not only in the sense that his affinities are with the greatest of the great poets that were before him or have been since, rather than with the multitude of inferior writers who have struggled into fame in verse, but great also in the sense that he gave a new impulse and a new direction to poetry helped to overturn in that splendid realm the dynasty of Pope, and to found that to which Wordsworth and Shelley and Byron belong Burns is only once a peasant and downish in the course of nearly a century during which his name has been illustrious. It is not in 1786, in the circles of rank and fashion in Edinburgh, in which he appears fresh from the plough—here his courtliness astonishes Dugald Stewart and delights the Duchess of Gordon—it is now when coming from Olympus, he is introduced to us as from Ayrshire. Though nothing could be more natural than his first appearance in the character of rustic bard, he has so long played a different part that his resumption of it is felt to border upon the grotesque and to be akin to fustian. The task which criticism has to perform in regard to him is indicated in this transformation of the natural man into something of a his trionic figure. It is a task of difficulty under any conditions, and not to be attempted with success in a very limited space. It is to explain how the publication of a small volume of poems chiefly in the Scottish dialect, the natural destiny of which would have seemed to be fulfilled in making the Ayrshire bard known in Ayrshire, or at the most in Scotland, should have turned out to be an occasion, in literature and in history of worldwide significance.

This explanation, be it ever so partial, must include, and perhaps ought to begin with, the admission, fatal to his character as a prodigy that the influences under which Burns was tutored into song were as eminently European in fact as they were singularly provincial in appearance. The Revolution, at any rate in action had not returned from America to France, when his poems were published. But the intellectual activity and turmoil which led to the Revolution was a phenomenon to which he was no more of a stranger in his humble and straitened sphere of life, than to summer's heat or winter's cold, or the west wind or man's in humanity to man. His father's cottage, in which, like the rest of the family (they were all readers), he sat at meals with a book in one hand and a spoon in the other was, as far as intelligence of most kinds was concerned, in open communication with Europe

and America, and the presiding spirit in it was an old peasant, whose sagacity and whose virtues would have adorned the rank to which Glencairn or Athole belonged. Whatever limitations were imposed upon the growth of his intellect, whatever obstacles were thrown in the way of his attaining literary distinction by a life of slavish toil such as he was condemned to live, there was nothing in his case in such a life to exclude, there was everything to beget and to intensify, sympathy with an age which had grown sick of conventionality, classicality, and unreality in life and literature, and which yearned passionately after a return to nature and to truth. This yearning might be less general and less eager among the peasants of Ayrshire than among some other classes in other parts of Europe, but then he belonged, by the discipline as well as by the force of his mind, rather to Europe than to Ayrshire. His education at school, though, even for a Scotch peasant's son, irregular and scanty, was sufficient to fit him for becoming a citizen of the world, and a citizen of the world he did become by the study of the best English authors in prose and verse and by critical familiarity with the songs and ballads of his country. In virtue of this citizenship, the spirit of Revolution being abroad in Europe, he was as certain to encounter it as was Tam O'Shanter on his way home from Ayr and from the company of Souter Johnny to see Kirk Alloway in a 'bleeze'

'He sings,' as he himself says, 'the sentiments and manners he felt and saw in himself and his rustic compeers around him', but it is after the manner of one who is accustomed to live and move in a larger world than that in which he and they had 'leave to toil.' While he has never yet set foot beyond his native county, his mind has travelled, he is familiar with the continental resorts of persons of quality, with hunters of Ponotaxi (who have to rhyme with orthodoxy), with scenes, events, characters in Eastern lands, and in the literature and history of antiquity. His ideas, sentiments, aspirations, hopes, fears, range easily and naturally beyond parochial and provincial limits into national affairs and the struggling life of civilised mankind. If he is ever more truly himself than in Bruce's Address to his troops at Bannockburn, a patriotic ode, it is in anticipating that golden age of the poet and the philanthropist when

'man to man the world o'er  
Shall brothers be for a that'

His countrymen are a pushing and adventurous race. Wherever

they go they carry with them as a feature of the national mind, an estimate of man as man, of wealth and worth of rank and work, which bears the stamp of one man's genius. Burns poems and songs are a programme of social and political reform and progress, or at any rate aspiration,—as radical a programme as could well be framed. No such programme, it is certain, ever had such currency in one nation as it has obtained among the Scottish race at home and abroad. For almost a century it has been said and sung by high and low by rank and fashion, by artisans and milkmaids, and aged inmates of the poorhouse. Children babble it and lisp it; it is the privileged sedition of public houses and public assemblies privileged almost like the Bible young ladies warble it at the request of their Tory grandfathers and to please their orthodox aunts; in kirks as well as where the shepherd tells his tale the echoes of it are never still. As far as there is any need to characterise his poetical lineage and development, this identifies Burns with the Revolution. It identifies him with it as respects the style of his poetry and also as respects its substance. Machinery of all kinds deteriorates by use allowance should be made in all cases, that of poetry not excepted, for depreciation of value as the effect of wear and tear. Only the forces of nature are inexhaustible. Happily for him, Burns' poetical life fell within a period in which it had come to be felt that the machinery of the classical school of poetry was worn out, and that recourse must be had, for poetical power to unexhausted and inexhaustible nature. He owed thus to the spirit of the time that passion for truth and nature in the style of his poems which ensured them such welcome as the time could give to novelty and excellence combined. He was a debtor to the same source for the ideas and sentiments, or many of the ideas and sentiments, to which his poetry owes not a little of the vitality and the currency it has among men and nations to whom it is known only in an almost unknown tongue, or in more or less inadequate translations.

His poetry is instinct with the life and movement of one age,—one which was an era of resurrection from the dead and of revolt against all that had lived too long. Any explanation of Burns, however which is thus to be found where we find an explanation of Europe itself in the spirit of a particular age, is of course partial. Its merit is that it points to what is more essential and more comprehensive than itself. Burns' poetry shares with all poetry of the first order of excellence the life and movement not of one age but

of all ages, that which belongs to what Wordsworth calls 'the essential passions' of human nature. It is the voice of nature which we hear in his poetry, and it is of that nature one touch of which makes the whole world kin. It is doubtful whether any poet, ancient or modern, has evoked as much personal attachment of a fervid and perservid quality as Burns has been able to draw to himself. It is an attachment the amount and the quality of which are not to be explained by anything in the history of the man, anything apart from the exercise of his genius as a poet. His misfortunes, though they were great, do not account for it—these are cancelled by his faults, from which his misfortunes are not easily separated. What renders it at all intelligible is that human nature, in its most ordinary shapes, is more poetical than it looks, and that exactly at those moments of its consciousness in which it is most truly because most vividly and powerfully and poetically itself, Burns has a voice to give to it. He is not the poet's poet, which Shelley no doubt meant to be, or the philosopher's poet, which Wordsworth, in spite of himself, is. He is the poet of homely human nature, not half so homely or prosaic as it seems. His genius, in a manner all its own, associates itself with the fortunes, experiences, memorable moments, of human beings whose humanity is their sole patrimony, to whom 'liberty,' and whatever, like liberty, has the power

• To raise a man aboon the brute,  
And mak him ken himsel,'

is their portion in life, for whom the great epochs and never-to-be-forgotten phases of existence are those which are occasioned by emotions inseparable from the consciousness of existence. For the great majority of his readers, and therefore for the mass of human beings, the sympathy which exists between him and them is sympathy relative to their strongest and deepest feelings, and this is sympathy out of which personal affection naturally springs, and in the strength of which it cannot but grow strong. In this light Burns clubs and Burns celebrations, excursions and pilgrimages to one land of Burns, manifestations of personal affection without parallel for range or depth in the history of literature, instead of misleading the critical judgment as to his poetry, are an infallible index to the truth respecting it—namely, that the passions which live in it and by which it lives are the essential passions of human nature.

Of these plain 'good masters' his princely intellectual gifts are the humble and faithful servants. His imagination, humour pathos, the qualities in respect of which his genius is most powerful and opulent, are without reserve placed at their disposal and submitted to their dictation. His genius might possibly have elected to move sometimes in a different sphere, but this is the sphere in which its creative force is habitually spent. Words and phrases which derive their significance from what belongs to it are those that recur oftenest in his best and in his worst lines, and linger in our ears with the airs to which his songs are sung. As part and parcel of its contents, and as they are assorted in its compass, freedom and whisky gang thegither in his rhymes so do mirth and care, despair and rapture, pride of birth and pride of worth, love and sorrow and death, auld acquaintance not to be forgotten, social inequalities not to be forgiven, hypocrisy at its prayers and commiseration for the wretched which extends to the brute creation and cannot be withheld from the devil. That the worst of it as well as the best of it has power over him is the most that can be said in the way of censure or in the way of excuse in regard to that capital fault of his, a relish for grossness and even obscenity in the choice and treatment of his themes, which gives occasion to turgid moralists to talk of him as at once the glory and the shame of literature, and which, as disfiguring some of his best pieces no one has more reason to regret than he who has to do justice to the genius of the poet by making a selection from his works.

Genius can explain everything except itself. In this limitation of his genius to one sphere of activity we have, however not only some explanation of the place which Burns occupies in European literature and European history but also a revelation of the inner structure and quality of his genius. Genius which in every case eludes and defies definition is by this restriction of its operations shown to be in his case, more than most, synonymous with force of mind, that force which cleaves its way through the shows of things to the reality behind them and beyond them.

The heart y's the part ay  
That makes us right or wrang

To say that this is his poetical creed is to say that poetical genius in his case is akin to or identical with majestic common sense, an intellect of singular power to penetrate appearance and become conversant with reality and truth—that reality and truth which are

to be found, if anywhere, in the sphere of the passions and emotions of which he is the laureate. He is closer to this reality than other poets because his mental force is greater than theirs and carries him farther and straighter from the surface of things towards the centre. His poetry makes a gift again to folly of that definition of poetry which was presented by folly to stupidity—that is the best poetry which is the most feigning. It feigns not at all when it is at its best, and but little when it is at its worst. So much reality is there in it to the experience of common mortals, that it is commonly mistaken among them for useful information for the people. Where it is not understood as comprehending the choicest products of imagination, humour, pathos, it is admired and valued as a repertory of oracular wisdom. When it is denied the welcome to which it is entitled as song, the gift of the gods, it is sure of applause as the ‘path of sense,’ of which every man as he believes has his own share. Genius in the case of Burns is thus shown to be compact of sense, sagacity, intelligence of a powerful and piercing order, general force of mind to which nature and life cannot but yield up their deepest secrets. It is in the sphere of the essential passions of human nature that reality lies. That Burns, in a manner all his own, is rigid, not consciously always, but instinctively, in adhering to this sphere, is evidence that what takes in him the form and fashion of genius is common sense.

A melancholy or rather a mournful interest attaches to several of his poems—*A Bard's Epitaph* for example, and the *Epistle to a Young Friend*—as showing that intellect and passion were as far from being perfectly adjusted in his life as they have been in the lives of many other sons of genius. That they were not on better terms with each other than they actually were, it may be, is a matter which calls rather for regret than for amazement. Considering what nature made him and what his destiny was, considering how rudely in his case the sensibilities of a gifted soul clashed with the exigencies of a sordid lot, it is possibly not a matter for as much astonishment as has been sometimes expressed, that the last chapter of his history should be one which cannot be read without a pang of sorrow for the degradation of genius. Had he been a struggling tradesman in Paris instead of a struggling farmer in Ayrshire and a measurer of ale-skins at Dumfries, Burns would no doubt have lived and died with a reputation for sobriety as unimpeachable as that of Beranger. But for that insanity, compounded of headache

and melancholy, from which he suffered all his life, as the result of being made to do a man's work when he was a boy; but for his being 'half fed, half sarkit, too literally and too long not to be rendered 'half mad as well, it is open to a candid judgment to suppose that the thoughtless follies which laid him low would not have been committed, at any rate would not have cut half as formidable a figure as they do in the count and reckoning of some of the honorary sheriffs and respectable aldermen of literature. But however it may have been that the relations of intellect and passion were imperfectly or ill adjusted in his life, their perfect harmony is the marvel and the glory of his song. Passages indeed from various pieces of his, perhaps whole pieces, could be cited which fall below the level of poetry in the strictest sense of the word, for which no higher character can be claimed than that of rhymed prose, because sense and sagacity or wit and humour predominate in them in too marked a degree over feeling and imagination. It is as if the balance, rarely right adjusted, in his life, swung heavily sometimes in his verse to the other side. But it is only where it is chargeable with this excess of sense, or where it is written in that English tongue of which he never attained any mastery in verse, that his poetry falls short of excellence as regards the union of intellect and passion the union of which is the first condition of poetical vitality. His passions, according to a well known account of them from the best authority 'raged like so many devils till they found vent in rhyme. They could not have raged more or raged less any day without perhaps marring the perfection of a stanza or a song which has almost the perfection of the work of Shakespeare or of nature. His one poetical failing besides being one which leans to virtue's side, is exhibited for the most part only where it is harmless—in his epistles, satires, and especially his epigrams. His songs, on which after all his fame must mainly rest, are free from it, though even in them passion is governed and moderated in such a manner that in the whole collection of them there is abundant evidence of sense and sanity which it would have been fatal to obtrude in any one of them. His claim to be considered the first of song writers is hardly disputed. It is a claim which rests upon scores of lyrics, each of which might be cited as an instance of lyrical passion at its best and highest. Lyrical passion in his case drew its strength from various and opposite sources, from the clashing experiences, habits, and emotions of a nature which needed nothing so much as

regulation and harmony. But it is itself harmony as perfect as the song of the linnet and the thrush piping to a summer evening of peace on earth and glory in the western sky. Whatever the poet's eye has seen of beauty, or his heart has felt of mirth or sadness or madness, melts into it and becomes a tone, a chord of music of which, but for one singer, the world should hardly have known the power to thrill the universal heart. He could not begin to write a song till he had crooned over and got into his head some old air to which words might be adapted. Only when his songs are sung are they legitimately said, is the melody, of them vocalised. Their affinity with music by origin and by use is only symbolic of the harmony to which lyrical passion in them has set the incongruous facts and experiences of human life and destiny. The best of them are serious and pathetic, like *Mary Morrison*, *My Nanie O*, *Of a' the airts the wind can blaw*, but serious and pathetic like these, or arch and airy and humorous like *Tan Gler* and *Duncan Gray*, they draw upon sources of melody of which Tibullus and Petrarch and Beranger had almost as little knowledge as of the sources of the Lugal or of the banks of Bonnie Doon.

Like Shakespeare, Burns is almost as great in the matter of borrowing as in that of originality. His measures are without exception those with which he was familiar in his favourites and predecessors, Ramsay and Fergusson, or in the ballads and songs which the stream of time might be said to have brought down to his poetical mill. His *Cotter's Saturday Night* is modelled upon Fergusson's *Farmer's Ingle*, his *Holy Fair* upon the same poet's *Leith Races*. His epistles are Ramsay's and Fergusson's in form and spirit, only instinct with a kind of genius to which neither Ramsay nor Fergusson had any pretensions. One stanza in which he wrote a great deal, for which among poetical measures he had as much partiality as he had for winter among the seasons, or the mavis among birds, or humanity among the virtues, and which his readers, even Scotch readers, find it sometimes hard to endure, was no doubt made classical to him and informed with music by its having been made use of by predecessors of his, of whose genius he had formed a most generous and uncritical estimate.

His best work is distributed over three periods, into which his poetical life can be most easily divided—the first marked by the publication of his poems at Kilmarnock, 1786, when he was at the age of twenty-seven, the second comprehending the extraordinary fertility of his later residence in Ayrshire (at Mossiel), and ter-

minating in 1788, and the third being the melancholy last years at Ellisland and Dumfries, in which his recreation was to give to his country and the world a store of songs, original and amended, such as no other country possesses. *The Jolly Beggars* that in comparable opera in which critical genius of the highest order has discovered the highest flight of his poetical genius, belongs to the first period, though not published till after his death. *The Cotter's Saturday Night* belongs to the same period. *My Nannie O* is one of its songs. As regards humour and imagination it could be represented either by *Death and Doctor Hornbook*, or the *Address to the Deil*, or *The Holy Fair*. With reference to the work which was done by him before the close of this period, considering its quality and variety considering how much of it is destined to hold a permanent place in literature, Burns is perhaps to be regarded as the most remarkable instance on record of the precocity of genius, at any rate poetical genius. It would be difficult to point to a single rival for poetical fame who before the age of twenty six or twenty seven had contributed as much to the stock of literature, exempt for ever from oblivion. He was in this sense something of the prodigy which, in respect of his being born a peasant, Jeffrey would not allow him to be considered.

In each of these three periods of his poetical life he was at his best in one or other of the departments of song in which his greatness is least open to question. To Ellisland and Dumfries, the last of the three, besides *Tam o' Shanter* and *Captain Gross* belongs the glory of that marvellous series of songs, new and old, original and improved, which it was the unhappy exciseman-poet's one pure delight to contribute to the *Miscellanies* in which they appeared. Whether his genius was exhausted by the activity of these ten or a dozen years, or whether if his life had been prolonged, he might not have undertaken and accomplished some even greater task than any he had attempted, is a question to which no very certain answer can be given. He might have done something to diminish the interval between him and the poets of the first order—those whose poetry includes character and action as well as passion. He was ambitious of doing something of the kind. At one time the scheme of an epic, at another the plans for a tragedy were revolved in his mind. But if we may judge from a fragment of his intended drama, from the quality of his English verses, or from the leading features of his character it seems unlikely that he would under any circumstances have made a nearer approach

than he has done, or than that other passionate pilgrim of the realm of song, Byron, has done, to Milton or Shakspeare. His nearest approach to Shakspeare and Milton must be held to be that he wrote for the same theatre as they—not for an age, but for all time.

If only because the essential passions of human nature are so peculiarly and exclusively the sphere in which his genius moves, the question whether on the whole the influence of his poetry is wholesome, is a question touching the perpetuity of his fame. It is the native sphere of morality and religion in which his genius disports itself, and hence, though it cannot be required of poetry that it should directly inculcate virtue and piety, yet poetry like his has only the choice of recognising at their proper value the highest instincts and feelings of human nature, or ensuring its own consignment to neglect and oblivion by clashing with them. For, as critics have at length discovered, poetry is not meant for critics but for mankind. If it is of use to mankind it has a chance of life, if not it must die. On these terms, like other poets, Burns is a competitor for immortality, and on these terms, though his claim has been variously judged, it is now generally admitted to be strong. It is true, as has been already acknowledged, that touches of grossness and obscenity disfigure some of his best pieces, and are the execrable characteristics of some of his worst. It is true also that religious people have had much fault to find with *The Holy Fair* and *Holy Willie*, and other satires of his in which religious, or rather ecclesiastical things and personages, have been held up to ridicule and scorn. But the one fault he shares with many of his brother poets whose immortality is not doubtful, the other to most persons is rendered venial by a doubt as to whether it is not rather a capital merit than an unpardonable sin. His morality is not always perfect, sometimes it sanctions or applauds what cannot be defended. But he never ridicules religion except when the religion in question is in the nature of things ridiculous, and only not so by an accident of time or place. On the other hand, it is a world from which virtue and piety are not absent into which he habitually escapes from scenes in the actual world in which, with most of his generation, he was tempted to linger too long and too agreeably. Sordid and even revolting as some of these scenes are, they are yet to the reader of all that he has written only grotesque openings into a world beyond and above them in which everything fair and good has its own place—love and truth, joy in all that is pure and high, sorrow over all that is weak and low and

sad, in the life of man. Hypocrisy superstition, fanaticism owe him a heavy grudge. But in Scotland at least, and where *The Holy Fair* is remembered and *Hy W illie* is not unknown spiritual religion owes him little but thanks.

On this subject only a word more need be said. Burns lives above all, and is destined to live, in his songs. In them at any rate, he lives for an infinitely larger public than knows much of him as the author of *Hallowe'en* or *The Jolly Beggars*. By his songs, though they too furnish his more austere censors with complaint, the service which he rendered to morality and religion is one the value of which can hardly be over-estimated. It is a remarkable fact that a country, the history of which is so much, as that of Scotland is a history of religious or at any rate ecclesiastical events, especially battles, a country too which has not been unprolific in poetical talent, should have given birth to almost no religious poetry worth the name. Yet hardly is religious poetry a more prolific crop in the country of Dunbar and Burns and Scott than figs or peaches or bananas. It may be after all that other passions than those spiritual ones which find expression for themselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, have been chiefly concerned in those religious movements of which Scottish history is a tedious record. But be that as it may Burns inherited from his poetical ancestry a wealth not of hymns but of songs and ballads, chiefly of course amatory. They inspired him with harmonies compared with which they are themselves harsh and out of tune—the inimitable airs to which they were sung were reverberated from his mind in words in which there is the very soul of melody. In this process of transmitting what he received from the past to the future to which he looked forward as a better day for all mankind, he changed, as regards morality, silver into gold, dirt into the fragrance of lilies and violets, foul dirt into the breath of meadows and of shady paths through woods and by the banks of murmuring streams. As a reformer of one branch of literature, when centuries that are centuries still have dwindled into years, he may perhaps be named along with John Knox and Walter Scott in the history of the Scottish Reformation. Anyhow judged by his songs, Burns' fame has little to fear from any question being raised as to whether the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the instance of his poetry is really what it seems—a tree that is good for food and pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise.

## MARY MORISON

To — 'Bide ye yet'

O Mary, at thy window be,  
 It is the wished, the tryed hour!  
 Those smiles and glances let me see,  
 That make the miser's treasure poor,  
 How blithely wad I bide the stour!<sup>1</sup>  
 A weary slave frae sun to sun,  
 Could I the rich reward secure,  
 The lovely Mary Morison

Yestreen, when to the trembling string  
 The dance gied thro' the lighted h<sup>1</sup>,  
 To thee my fancy took its wing,  
 I sat, but neither heard nor saw,  
 Tho' this was fair, and that was braw,  
 And yon the toost of a' the town,  
 I sigh'd, and said amang them a',  
 'Ye are na Mary Morison'

O Mary, canst thou wreck his peace,  
 Wha for thy sake wad gladly die?  
 Or canst thou break that heart of his,  
 Whase only faut is loving thee?  
 If love for love thou wilt na gie,  
 At least be pity to me shown!  
 A thought ungente canna be  
 The thought o' Mary Morison

## MY NANIE, O

Behind yon hills where Lugar flows,  
 'Mang moors an' mosses many, O,  
 The wintry sun the day has closed,  
 And I'll awa to Nanie, O

<sup>1</sup> worry trouble

The westlin wind blaws loud an' shill  
 The night's balth mirk and rainy O!  
 But I'll get my plaid, an' out I'll steal,  
 An' owre the hill to Nanie, O  
 My Nanie's charming sweet, an' young;  
 Nae artfu' wiles to win ye, O  
 May ill befa' the flattering tongue  
 That wad beguile my Nanie, O  
 Her face is fair her heart is true,  
 As spotless as she's bonie, O  
 The op'ning gowan, wat wi' dew  
 Nae purer is than Nanie, O  
 A country lad is my degree,  
 An' few there be that ken me O;  
 But what care I how few they be?  
 I'm welcome ay to Nanie, O  
 My riches a's my penny fee,  
 An' I maun guide it cannie, O  
 But warl's gear ne'er troubles me,  
 My thoughts are a' my Nanie, O  
 Our auld Guidman delights to view  
 His sheep an' kye thrive bonie, O;  
 But I'm as blythe that hands his plough,  
 An' has nae care but Nanie, O  
 Come weal, come woe, I care na by  
 I'll tak what Heaven will sen me, O  
 Nae ither care in life have I  
 But live, an' love my Nanie, O

GREEN GROW THE RASHES. A FRAGMENT

*Chorus.*

Green grow the rashes, O;  
 Green grow the rashes O;  
 The sweetest hours that e'er I spend,  
 Are spent among the lasses, O!

There's nought but care on ev'ry han',  
 In ev'ry hour that passes, O,  
 What signifies the life o' man,  
 An' 'twere na for the lasses, O.  
 The warly<sup>1</sup> race may riches chase,  
 An' riches still may fly them, O,  
 An' tho' at last they catch them fast,  
 Their hearts can ne'er enjoy them, O.  
 But gie me a cannie hour at e'en,  
 My arms about my dearie, O,  
 An' warly cares, an' warly men,  
 May a' gae tapsalteerie<sup>2</sup>, O!  
 For you sae douce<sup>3</sup>, ye sneer at this,  
 Ye're nought but senseless asses, O,  
 The wisest man the warl' e'er saw,  
 He dearly lov'd the lasses, O  
 Auld Nature swears, the lovely dears  
 Her noblest work she classes, O,  
 Her 'prentice han' she tried on man,  
 An' then she made the lasses, O

THE DEATH AND DYING WORDS OF POOR MAILIE, THE  
 AUTHOR'S ONLY PET YOWE<sup>4</sup>

AN UNCO MOURNFU' TALE

As Mailie an' her lambs thegither  
 Were ae day nibbling on the tether,  
 Upon her cloot<sup>5</sup> she coost<sup>6</sup> a hitch<sup>7</sup>,  
 An' owre she wars'd<sup>8</sup> in the ditch  
 There groaning, dying, she did lie,  
 When Hughoc<sup>9</sup> he cam doytin by  
 Wi' glowrin een, an' lifted han's,  
 Poor Hughoc like a statue stan's,  
 He saw her days were near-hand ended,  
 But, waes my heart! he could na mend it

<sup>1</sup> worldly      <sup>2</sup> topsy turvy      <sup>3</sup> sober, serious      <sup>4</sup> ewe.

<sup>5</sup> hoof      <sup>6</sup> cast      <sup>7</sup> loop      <sup>8</sup> tumbled

<sup>9</sup> A neibor herd-callan about three-fourths as wise as other folk.

He gaped wide, but naething spak.  
At length poor Mailie silence brak.

'O thou, whase lamentable face  
Appears to mourn my woefu case!  
My dying words attentive hear  
An bear them to my Master dear  
'Tell him if eer again he keep  
As muckle gear as buy a sheep,  
O bid him never tie them mair  
Wi wicked strings o hemp or hair!  
But ca them out to park or hill,  
An' let them wander at their will;  
So may his flock increase an grow  
To scores o lambs, an packs o' woo'<sup>1</sup>!

'Tell him, he was a Master kin  
An ay was guid to me an mine;  
An now my dying charge I gie him,  
My helpless lambs, I trust them wi him.

'O bid him save their harmless lives,  
Frae dogs, an tods<sup>2</sup>, an butchers knives!  
But gie them guld cow milk their fill,  
Till they be fit to fend<sup>3</sup> themsel  
An tent<sup>4</sup> them duly een an morn,  
Wi tacts<sup>5</sup> o hay an rippis<sup>6</sup> o' corn.

'An may they never learn the gacts<sup>7</sup>  
Of ither vile, wanrestfu' pets!  
To slink thro slaps<sup>8</sup> an reave<sup>9</sup> an steal,  
At stacks o' pease or stocks o' hail.  
So may they like their great forbears<sup>10</sup>,  
For monie a year come thro the sheers;  
So wives will gie them blits o' bread,  
An bairns greet<sup>11</sup> for them when they re dead.

'My poor toop<sup>12</sup> lamb, my son an bair  
O bid him breed him up wi' care!  
An if he live to be a beast,  
To pit some havins<sup>14</sup> in his breast!

wool.    <sup>1</sup> foxes.    <sup>2</sup> make shift.    <sup>3</sup> tend.    <sup>4</sup> small quantities.  
<sup>5</sup> handfuls.    <sup>6</sup> ways.    restless.    gaps in fences.    <sup>7</sup> rob.  
<sup>8</sup> forefathers.    <sup>9</sup> weep.    <sup>10</sup> tap.    <sup>11</sup> good manners.



What's a your jargon o' your schools,  
 Your Latin names for horns an' stools  
 If honest nature made you fools,  
     What sairs your grammars?  
 Ye'd better taen up spades and shools<sup>9</sup>  
     Or knappin' hammers.

A set o' dull, conceited hashes<sup>4</sup>,  
 Confuse their brains in college classes!  
 They gang in stirks<sup>5</sup> and come out asses,  
     Plam truth to speak;  
 An' syne<sup>6</sup> they think to climb Parnassus  
     By dint o' Greek!

Gie me ae spark o' Nature's fire,  
 That's a the learning I desire  
 Then tho' I drudge thro' dub an' mire  
     At pleugh or cart,  
 My Muse, though hamely in attire,  
     May touch the heart.

O for a spunk o' Allan's glee,  
 Or Fergusons, the bauld and slee,  
 Or bright Lapraik's, my friend to be,  
     If I can hit it!  
 That would be lear<sup>7</sup> enough for me,  
     If I could get it.

TO A MOUSE, ON TURNING HER UP IN HER NEST  
 WITH THE PLOUGH, NOVEMBER, 1785.

Wee, sleekit, cowrin, tim'rous beastie,  
 O what a panic's in thy breastie!  
 Thou need na start awa' sae hasty,  
     Wi' bickerin' brattle<sup>10</sup>!  
 I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,  
     Wi' murd'ring pattle<sup>11</sup>!

serves.   <sup>9</sup> shovels.   stone-breaking   loots.   year old cow  
 or bullock.   then.   pond.   spark.   learning   <sup>10</sup> hurry  
 hand-stick for clearing the plough.

I'm truly sorry man's dominion  
 Has broken Nature's social union,  
 An' justifies that ill opinion,  
                     Which makes thee startle  
 At me, thy poor, earth-born companion,  
                     An' fellow-mortal !

I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thieve .  
 What then ? poor beastie, thou maun live !  
 A daimen-icker<sup>1</sup> in a thrave  
                     'S a sma' request  
 I'll get a blessing wi' the lave<sup>2</sup>,  
                     And never miss't'

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin !  
 Its silly wa's the win's are strewin !  
 An' naething, now, to big<sup>3</sup> a new one,  
                     O' foggage green !  
 An' bleak December's winds ensuin,  
                     Baith snell<sup>4</sup> an' keen !

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,  
 An' weary winter comin fast,  
 An' cozie here, beneath the blast,  
                     Thou thought to dwell,  
 Till, crash ! the cruel coulter past  
                     Out thro' thy cell

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble  
 Has cost thee mony a weary nibble !  
 Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,  
                     But<sup>5</sup> house or hald<sup>6</sup>,  
 To thole<sup>7</sup> the winter's sleety dribble,  
                     An' cranreuch<sup>8</sup> cauld !

<sup>1</sup> An ear of corn now and then, a thrave is twenty-four sheaves

<sup>2</sup> build

<sup>4</sup> bitter.

<sup>5</sup> without.

<sup>6</sup> holding.

<sup>7</sup> hoar-frost.

<sup>8</sup> rest.  
<sup>9</sup> endure.

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane<sup>1</sup>,  
 In proving foresight may be vain  
 The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men,  
     Gang aft agley<sup>2</sup>,  
 An' leave us nought but grief and pain,  
     For promised joy

Still thou art blest compared wi' me !  
 The present only toucheth thee  
 But, och ! I backward cast my e'e  
     On prospects drear !  
 An' forward, tho' I canna see,  
     I guess an' fear !

### THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT

Inscribed to R. Aiken, Esq

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil  
 Their homely joys, and destiny obscure ;  
 Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile,  
 The short and simple annals of the Poor — *Gray*

My loved, my honoured, much respected friend !  
 No mercenary bard his homage pays ;  
 With honest pride, I scorn each selfish end,  
 My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and praise  
 To you I sing in simple Scottish lays,  
 The lowly train in life's sequestered scene ;  
 The native feelings strong the guileless ways ;  
 What Aiken in a cottage would have been  
 Ah ! though his worth unknown far happier there I ween

November chill blaws loud wi' angry sigh<sup>3</sup>  
 The short'ning winter day is near a close ;  
 The miry beasts retreating frae the plough  
 The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose ;

<sup>1</sup> alone.

awry

whistling sound

The toil-worn Cotter frae his labour goes,—  
 This night his weekly toil is at an end,  
 Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,  
 Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,  
 And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward bend.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,  
 Beneath the shelter of an aged tree,  
 Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin, stacher<sup>1</sup> thro',  
 To meet their Dad, wi' flichterin<sup>2</sup> noise an' glee.  
 His wee bit ingle, blinkin bonnily,  
 His clean hearth-stane, his thriftie wifie's smile,  
 The hisping infant prattling on his knee,  
 Does a' his weary carking cares beguile,  
 An' makes him quite forget his labour an' his toil.

Belyve<sup>3</sup>, the elder bairns come drapping in,  
 At service out, amang the farmers roun'<sup>4</sup>,  
 Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie<sup>5</sup> rin  
 A cannie errand to a neebor town  
 Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman grown,  
 In youthfu' bloom, love sparkling in her e'e,  
 Comes hame, perhaps, to show a braw new gown,  
 Or deposite her sair-won penny-fee,  
 To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

Wi' joy unfeigned brothers and sisters meet,  
 An' each for other's welfare kindly spiers<sup>6</sup>  
 The social hours, swift-winged, unnoticed fleet;  
 Each tells the uncos<sup>7</sup> that he sees or hears,  
 The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years,

<sup>1</sup> stagger<sup>2</sup> fluttering<sup>3</sup> by and by

<sup>4</sup> Although the 'Cotter' in the Saturday Night, is an exact copy of my father in his manners, his family devotions, and exhortations, yet the other parts of the description do not apply to our family. None of us ever were 'At service out amang the neebors roun'.' Instead of our depositing our 'sair-won penny fee' with our parents, my father laboured hard, and lived with the most rigid economy, that he might be able to keep his children at home—*Gilbert Burns to Dr Currie, Oct 24, 1800*

<sup>5</sup> attractively<sup>6</sup> enquires<sup>7</sup> news

Anticipation forward points the view  
 The mother wi her needle an her sheers,  
 Gars<sup>1</sup> auld claes look amais<sup>t</sup> as weel s the new;  
 The father mixes a wi<sup>2</sup> admonition due.

Their master's an their mistress's command,  
 The younkens a are warn'd to obey  
 And mind their labours wi' an eydent<sup>3</sup> hand,  
 And neer tho out o' sight, to jauk<sup>4</sup> or play  
 And, oh! be sure to fear the Lord alway  
 And munda your duty duly morn and night!  
 Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray  
 Implore His counsel and assisting might  
 They never sought in vam that sought the Lord aright!

But, hark! a rap comes gently to the door;  
 Jenny wha kens the meaning o the same,  
 Tells how a neibor lad came o'er the moor,  
 To do some errands, and convoy her hame.  
 The wily mother sees the conscious flame  
 Sparkle in Jenny's ee, and flush her cheek;  
 Wi' heart struck anxious care, inquires his name,  
 While Jenny hafflins<sup>5</sup> is afraid to speak  
 Weel pleased the mother hears, it's nae wild worthless rake.

Wi kindly welcome Jenny brings him ben<sup>6</sup>  
 A strappan youth he takes the mother's eye;  
 Blythe Jenny sees the visit's no ill taen  
 The father cracks<sup>7</sup> o' horses, pleughs, and kye.  
 The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi joy  
 But, blate<sup>8</sup> and laithfu scarce can weel behave  
 The mother wi' a woman's wiles, can spy  
 What makes the youth sae bashfu' an sae grave  
 Weel pleased to think her bairn's respected like the lave<sup>9</sup>

O happy love! where love like this is found!  
 O heart felt raptures! bliss beyond compare!  
 I've paced much this weary mortal round,  
 And sage experience bids me this declare—

makes.            diligent.            dally            half            into the room.  
 talks.            bashful.            sheepish.            <sup>6</sup> the rest.

'If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,  
 One cordial in this melancholy vale,  
 'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair,  
 In other's arms breathe out the tender tale,  
 Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the evening gale!'

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart  
 A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth!  
 That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,  
 Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?  
 Curse on his perjured arts! dissembling smooth!  
 Are honour, virtue, conscience, all exiled?  
 Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,  
 Points to the parents fondling o'er their child?  
 Then paints the ruined maid, and their distraction wild!

But now the supper crowns their simple board,  
 The halesome parritch, chief o' Scotia's food  
 The sowpe their only hawkie<sup>1</sup> does afford,  
 That 'yont the hallan<sup>2</sup> snugly chows her cood,  
 The dame brings forth in complimentary mood,  
 To grace the lad, her weel hained<sup>3</sup> kebbuck<sup>4</sup> fell<sup>5</sup>,  
 An' aft he's prest, an' aft he ca's it guid,  
 The frugal wife, garrulous, will tell  
 How 'twas a towmond<sup>6</sup> auld, sin' lint was i' the bell<sup>7</sup>.

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,  
 They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;  
 The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,  
 The big ha'-Bible<sup>8</sup>, ance his father's pride:  
 His bonnet reverently is laid aside,  
 His lyart haffets<sup>9</sup> wearing thin an' bare;  
 Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,  
 He wales<sup>10</sup> a portion with judicious care,  
 And 'Let us worship God!' he says, with solemn air.

<sup>1</sup> cow      <sup>2</sup> partition wall.      <sup>3</sup> well saved      <sup>4</sup> cheese.      <sup>5</sup> pungent.

<sup>6</sup> a twelvemonth.

<sup>7</sup> Since the flax was in flower

<sup>8</sup> half-Bible.

<sup>9</sup> grey side locks,

<sup>10</sup> chooses

They chant their artless notes in simple guise ;  
 They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim  
 Perhaps Dundee's wild warbling measures rise,  
 Or plaintive 'Martyra, worthy of the name  
 Or noble 'Elgin beets' the heavenward flame,  
 The sweetest far of Scotland's holy lays  
 Compared with these, Italian trills are tame ;  
 The tickled ears no heart felt raptures raise ;  
 Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.

The priest like father reads the sacred page,  
 How Abram was the friend of God on high ;  
 Or Moses bade eternal warfare wage  
 With Amalek's ungracious progeny ;  
 Or how the royal Bard did groaning lie  
 Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire  
 Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry  
 Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire ;  
 Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,  
 How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed ;  
 How He, who bore in Heaven the second name,  
 Had not on earth whereon to lay His head  
 How His first followers and servants sped  
 The precepts sage they wrote to many a land  
 How he, who lone in Patmos banished,  
 Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand ;  
 And heard great Babylon's doom pronounced by Heaven's  
 command.

Then kneeling down, to Heaven's Eternal King,  
 The saint, the father and the husband prays  
 Hope 'springs exulting on triumphant wing,'<sup>1</sup>  
 That thus they all shall meet in future days  
 There ever bask in uncreated rays,  
 No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,  
 Together hymning their Creator's praise,  
 In such society yet still more dear  
 While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere.

<sup>1</sup> *Eccl.*Pope's *Windsor Forest*.—R. R.

Compared with this, how poor Religion's pride,  
In all the pomp of method and of art,  
When men display to congregations wide  
Devotion's every grace, except the heart !  
The Power, incensed, the pageant will desert,  
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole ,  
But haply, in some cottage far apart,  
May hear, well pleased, the language of the soul ;  
And in His book of life the inmates poor enroll.

Then homeward all take off their several way ,  
The youngling cottagers retire to rest  
The parent-pair their secret homage pay,  
And proffer up to Heaven the warm request,  
That He, who stills the raven's clamorous nest,  
And decks the lily fair in flowery pride,  
Would, in the way His wisdom sees the best,  
For them, and for their little ones provide ,  
But chiefly, in their hearts with grace divine preside.

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,  
That makes her loved at home, revered abroad  
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings ,  
'An honest man's the noblest work of God '   
And certes, in fair virtue's heavenly road,  
The cottage leaves the palace far behind ,  
What is a lordling's pomp ? a cumbrous load,  
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,  
Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refined !

O Scotia ! my dear, my native soil !  
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent,  
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil  
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content !  
And, oh, may Heaven their simple lives prevent  
From luxury's contagion, weak and vile '  
Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,  
A virtuous populace may rise the while,  
And stand a wall of fire around their much-loved Isle.

O Thou! who poured the patriotic tide  
 That streamed thro' Wallace's undaunted heart;  
 Who dared to nobly stem tyrannic pride,  
 Or nobly die, the second glorious part,  
 (The patriot's God peculiarly Thou art,  
 His friend, inspirer guardian, and reward)  
 O never never Scotia's realm desert  
 But still the patriot, and the patriot-bard,  
 In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard!

## ADDRESS TO THE DEIL.

O Prince! O Chief of many throned Pow'rs,  
 That led th' embattled Seraphim to war—*Milton*.

O thou! whatever title suit thee,  
 Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clootie,  
 Wha in yon cavern grim an sootie,  
                                 Closed under hatches,  
 Spairges<sup>1</sup> about the brunstane cootie<sup>2</sup>  
                                 To scaud poor wretches.

Hear me, auld Hangie, for a wee,  
 An' let poor damned bodie be  
 I'm sure sma pleasure it can gie,  
                                 Ev'n to a deil,  
 To skelp<sup>3</sup> an scaud poor dogs like me,  
                                 An hear us squeel!

Great is thy pow'r an' great thy fame  
 Far kenn'd an' noted is thy name  
 An, tho' yon lowin heughs thy hame,  
                                 Thou travels far;  
 An' faith! thou's neither lag nor lame,  
                                 Nor blate nor scaur<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> splashes.<sup>2</sup> pail.

slap.

flaming pit.

Neither bashful nor apt to be scared.

Whyles, ranging like a roarin lion,  
 For prey a' holes an' corners tryin ,  
 Whyles on the strong-winged tempest flyin,  
     Tirlin<sup>1</sup> the kirks ,  
 Whyles in the human bosom pryin,  
     Unseen thou lurks.

I've heard my reverend grannie say,  
 In lanely glens ye like to stray,  
 Or where auld ruined castles, gray,  
     Nod to the moon,  
 Ye fright the nightly wand'rer's way,  
     Wi' eldritch croon<sup>2</sup>.

When twilight did my grannie summon,  
 To say her pray'rs, douce, honest woman !  
 Aft 'yont the dyke she's heard you bummin,  
     W' eerie drone ,  
 Or, rustlin, thro' the boortrees<sup>3</sup> comin,  
     Wi' heavy groan.

Ae dreary, windy, winter night,  
 The stars shot down wi' sklentim<sup>4</sup> light,  
 Wi' you, mysel, I gat a fright,  
     Ayont the lough ,  
 Ye, like a rash-buss<sup>5</sup>, stood in sight,  
     Wi' waving sough

The cudgel in my nieve<sup>6</sup> did shake,  
 Each bristled hair stood like a stake,  
 When wi' an eldritch, stoor<sup>7</sup>, 'quaick, quaick,'  
     Amang the springs,  
 Awa ye squattered<sup>8</sup> like a drake,  
     On whistling wings.

<sup>1</sup> unroofing<sup>2</sup> frightful moan<sup>3</sup> elder trees<sup>4</sup> slanting<sup>5</sup> a bush of rushes.<sup>6</sup> fist<sup>7</sup> hoarse.<sup>8</sup> fluttered

Let warlocks' grim, an withered hags,  
 Tell how wi you on ragweed' nags,  
 They skim the muls, an dizzy crags,  
     Wi wicked speed  
 And in kirk yards renew their leagues,  
     Owre howkit' dead.

Thence, countra wives, wi toll an pain,  
 May plunge an plunge the kirm' in vain;  
 For, oh! the yellow treasure's taen  
     By witching skill  
 An dawtit' twal pint' Hawkie's gaen  
     As yell's' the bill'

When thowes' dissolve the snawy hoord"  
 An' float the jinglin icy board,  
 Then Water kelpies haunt the soord,  
     By your direction,  
 An nighted Trav'lers are allured  
     To their destruction.

An aft your moss-traversing Spunkles"  
 Decoy the wight that late an drunk is:  
 The bleezin, curst, mischievous monkeys  
     Delude his eyes,  
 Till in some miry slough he sunk is,  
     Neer mair to rise.

When masons mystic word an grip,  
 In storms an tempests raise you up  
 Some cock or cat your rage maun stop,  
     Or strange to tell!  
 The youngest 'brother ye wad whip  
     Aff straight to hell.

' wizards.  
 ' foedled.  
 thawa.

ragwort.  
 ' twelve-pint.  
 " board.

' digged up.  
 ' milkless.  
 " Will-o'-the-wisp.

' chern.  
 ' bull.

Lang syne, in Eden's bonie yard,  
 When youthfu' lovers first were paired,  
 An' all the soul of love they shared,  
     The raptured hour,  
 Sweet on the fragrant flow'ry mead,  
     In shady bow'r

Then you, ye auld, cruel drawin' dog,  
 Ye came to Paradise incog,  
 An' played on man a cursed brogue,  
     (Black be your fa'!)  
 An' gied the infant world a shog,  
     'Maist ruined a'

D've mind that day, when in a bizz,  
 Wi' reekit duds', an' reekit pizz,  
 Ye did present your smoutie phiz'  
     'Mang better folt,  
 An' sklentend<sup>9</sup> on the man of Uzz  
     Your spitefu' jol e?

An' how ye gat him i' your thrall,  
 An' brak him out o' house an' hal',  
 While scabs an' blotches did him gall,  
     Wi' bitter claw,  
 An' lowsed<sup>10</sup> his ill-tongued wicked scaul<sup>11</sup>,  
     Was warst ava<sup>12</sup>?

But a' your doings to rehearse,  
 Your wily snares and fechtin<sup>13</sup> fierce,  
 Sin' that day Michael<sup>14</sup> did you pierce,  
     Down to this time,  
 Wad ding<sup>15</sup> a' Lallan<sup>16</sup> tongue, or Erse,  
     In prose or rhyme

<sup>1</sup> Who draws stealthily the door-bolt    <sup>2</sup> trick    <sup>3</sup> lot    <sup>4</sup> shock  
<sup>5</sup> bustle    <sup>6</sup> smoky rags    <sup>7</sup> singed perwig  
<sup>8</sup> blackened face    <sup>9</sup> slanted    <sup>10</sup> loosed    <sup>11</sup> scold.    <sup>12</sup> of all  
<sup>13</sup> fighting    <sup>14</sup> Vide Milton, Book vi — R. B.    <sup>15</sup> exhaust.    <sup>16</sup> Lowland.

An now auld Cloots, I ken ye're thinkin,  
 A certain Bardie's rantin, drinkin,  
 Some luckless hour will send him linkin  
     To your black pit  
 But, faith! he'll turn a corner junkin'<sup>1</sup>  
     An' cheat you yet.

But, fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben!  
 O wad ye tak a thought an men!  
 Ye aiblins<sup>2</sup> might—I dinna ken—  
     Still hae a stake—  
 I'm wae to think upo' yon den,  
     Ev'n for your sake!

## FROM THE HOLY FAIR.

Now butt an' ben<sup>3</sup> the change-house fills,  
 WP yill-caup<sup>4</sup> commentators  
 Here's crying out for bakes<sup>5</sup> an' gills,  
 An there the pint stowp clatters  
 While thick an thrang, an loud an lang,  
 Wi logic, an w<sup>6</sup> Scripture,  
 They raise a din, that, in the end,  
 Is like to breed a rupture  
     O' wrath that day

Leeze me<sup>7</sup> on drink! it gies us mair  
 Than either school or college  
 It kindles wit, it waukens lear<sup>8</sup>  
 It pangs<sup>9</sup> us fou o' knowledge.  
 Be't whisky gill, or penny wheep<sup>10</sup>  
 Or ony stronger potion,  
 It never fails, on drinking deep,  
 To kittle<sup>11</sup> up our notion  
     By night or day

<sup>1</sup> tripping  
 ale-cup.

<sup>2</sup> small beer

<sup>3</sup> dodging  
 biscuits.

perhaps.  
 a blessing  
 tickle.

kitchen and parlour  
 learning crams

The lads an' lasses, blythely bent  
 To mind baith saul an' body,  
 Sit round the table, weel content,  
 An' steer<sup>1</sup> about the toddy  
 On this ane's dress, an' that ane's leuk,  
 They're makin observations,  
 While some are cozie i' the neuk<sup>2</sup>,  
 An' formin assignations  
     To meet some day  
 But now the Lord's ain trumpet touts<sup>3</sup>,  
 Till a' the hills are rairin,  
 An' echoes back return the shouts;  
 Black Russel<sup>4</sup> is na spairin  
 His piercing words, like Highlan swords,  
 Divide the joints an' marrow,  
 His talk o' Hell, whare devils dwell,  
 Our vera 'sauls does harrow'<sup>5</sup>  
     Wi' fright that day.  
 A vast, unbottom'd, boundless pit,  
 Fill'd fu' o' lowin<sup>6</sup> brunstane,  
 Wha's raging flame, an' scorching heat,  
 Wad melt the hardest whun-stane<sup>7</sup>!  
 The half asleep start up wi' fear,  
 An' think they hear it roarin,  
 When presently it does appear,  
 'Twas but some neibor snorin  
     Asleep that day  
 'Twad be owre lang a tale, to tell  
     How many stories past,  
 An' how they crowded to the yill<sup>8</sup>,  
     When they were a' dismist  
 How drink gaed round, in cogs an' caups<sup>9</sup>,  
     Amang the furms and benches,  
 An' cheese an' bread frae women's laps,  
     Was dealt about in lunches<sup>10</sup>  
     An' dawds<sup>11</sup> that day.

<sup>1</sup> stir<sup>2</sup> nook<sup>3</sup> blows<sup>4</sup> Minister of Kilmarnock.<sup>5</sup> Shakspeare's Hamlet—R B<sup>6</sup> flaming.<sup>7</sup> whinstone<sup>8</sup> ale<sup>9</sup> wooden vessels<sup>10</sup> slices.<sup>11</sup> lumps

In comes a gaucie<sup>1</sup> gash Guldwife,  
 An sits down by the fire,  
 Syne draws her kebbuck<sup>2</sup> an her knife,  
 The lasses they are shyer  
 The auld guidmen, about the grace,  
 Frae side to side they bother,  
 Till some ane by his bonnet lays,  
 An gies them<sup>3</sup> like a tether  
 Fu lang that day

Waesucks<sup>4</sup>! for him that gets nae lass,  
 Or lasses that hae naething!  
 Sma need has he to say a grace,  
 Or melvie his brow claithing!  
 O wives be mindfu', ance yoursel  
 How bonie lads ye wanted,  
 An dinna for a kebbuck heel,  
 Let lasses be affronted  
 On sic a day!

Now Clinkumbell<sup>5</sup>, wi' rattling tow,  
 Begins to jow<sup>6</sup> an croon;  
 Some swagger hame, the best they dow<sup>7</sup>,  
 Some wait the afternoon.  
 At slaps<sup>8</sup> the billies<sup>9</sup> halt a blink,  
 Till lasses strip their shoon  
 Wi' faith an hope, an love an drink,  
 They re a in famous tune  
 For crack<sup>10</sup> that day

EPISTLE TO A YOUNG FRIEND<sup>11</sup>

May 1786.

I lang hae thought, my youthfu friend,  
 A something to have sent you,  
 Tho it should serve nae ither end  
 Than just a kind memento

<sup>1</sup> jolly      <sup>2</sup> cheese.      waes me!      soil.      <sup>3</sup> the bell ringer  
 to peal or roar      <sup>4</sup> they can.      gaps in fences.      <sup>5</sup> lads  
<sup>6</sup> talk.      <sup>7</sup> Andrew Aiken.

But how the subject-theme may gang,  
 Let time and chance determine ,  
 Perhaps it may turn out a sang,  
 Perhaps turn out a sermon

Ye'll try the world soon, my lad,  
 And Andrew dear, believe me,  
 Ye'll find mankind an unco squird,  
 And muckle they may grieve ye  
 For care and trouble set your thought,  
 Ev'n when your end's attained ,  
 And a' your views may come to nought,  
 Where ev'ry nerve is strained

I'll no say, men are villains a',  
 The real, hardened wicked,  
 Wha hae nae check but human law,  
 Are to a few restricket ,  
 But, och ! mankind are unco weak,  
 An' little to be trusted ,  
 If self the wavering balance shake,  
 It's rarely right adjusted !

Yet they wha fa'<sup>1</sup> in fortune's strife,  
 Their fate we shouldna censure,  
 For still the important end of life  
 They equally may answer ,  
 A man may hae an honest heart,  
 Tho' poortith<sup>2</sup> hourly stare him ,  
 A man may tak a neighbor's part,  
 Yet hae nae cash to spare him.

Aye free, aff-han' your story tell,  
 When wi a bosom crony ,  
 But still keep something to yoursel  
 Ye scarcely tell to ony  
 Conceal yoursel as weel's ye can  
 Frae critical dissection ,  
 But keek<sup>3</sup> thro' ev'ry other man,  
 Wi' sharpened, sly inspection.

<sup>1</sup> fall<sup>2</sup> poverty<sup>3</sup> peep

The sacred lowe<sup>1</sup> o' weel placed love,  
 Luxuriantly indulge it  
 But never tempt th' illicit rove,  
 Tho' naething should divulge it  
 I waive the quantum o' the sin  
 The hazard o' concealing;  
 But, och! it hardens a' within,  
 And petrifies the feeling!

To catch dame Fortune's golden smile,  
 Assiduous wait upon her;  
 And gather gear by ev'ry wile  
 That's justified by honour  
 Not for to hide it in a hedge,  
 Nor for a train attendant  
 But for the glorious privilege  
 Of being independent.

The fear o' hell's a hangman's whip,  
 To hand the wretch in order  
 But where ye feel your honour grip,  
 Let that aye be your border;  
 Its slightest touches, instant pause—  
 Debar a' side pretences  
 And resolutely keep its laws,  
 Uncaring consequences.

The great Creator to revere,  
 Must sure become the creature;  
 But still the preaching cant forbear,  
 And ev'n the rigid feature  
 Yet ne'er with wits profane to range.  
 Be complaisance extended  
 An atheist-laugh's a poor exchange  
 For Deity offended!

When ranting round in pleasure's ring,  
 Religion may be blinded  
 Or if she gie a random sting,  
 It may be little minded;

<sup>1</sup> flame.

But when on life we're tempest-driv'n—  
 A conscience but<sup>1</sup> a canker,  
 A correspondence fix'd wi' Heav'n,  
 Is sure a noble anchor!

Adieu, dear amiable Youth!  
 Your heart can ne'er be wanting!  
 May prudence, fortitude, and truth,  
 Erect your brow undaunting!  
 In ploughman phrase, 'God send you speed,  
 Still daily to grow wiser,  
 And may you better reckon the rede<sup>2</sup>,  
 Than ever did th' Adviser!

#### A BARD'S EPITAPH.

Is there a whim-inspired fool,  
 Owre fast for thought, owre hot for rule,  
 Owre blate<sup>3</sup> to seek, owre proud to snool,<sup>4</sup>  
     Let him draw near,  
 And owre this grassy heap sing dool,  
     And drap a tear

Is there a bard of rustic song,  
 Who, noteless, steals the crowds among,  
 That weekly this area throng,  
     O, pass not by!  
 But, with a frater-feeling strong,  
     Here, heave a sigh.

Is there a man whose judgment clear,  
 Can others teach the course to steer,  
 Yet runs, himself, life's mad career  
     Wild as the wave,  
 Here pause—and, thro' the starting tear,  
     Survey this grave.

<sup>1</sup> without      <sup>2</sup> heed the counsel.      <sup>3</sup> bashful.      <sup>4</sup> submit tamely

The poor inhabitant below  
 Was quick to learn, and wise to know  
 And keenly felt the friendly glow  
     And softer flame  
 But thoughtless follies laid him low  
     And stained his name!

Reader attend—whether thy soul  
 Soars fancy's flights beyond the pole,  
 Or dorkling grubs this earthly hole,  
     In low pursuit  
 know prudent, cautious self-control  
     Is wisdom's root.

FROM THE EPISTLE TO MRS. SCOTT OF WAUCHOPR

I mind it weel, in early date,  
 When I was beardless, young, and blate,  
     An first could thresh the barn,  
 Or haud a yokin at the pleugh,  
 An tho' forfoughten sair enough,  
     Yet unco<sup>3</sup> proud to learn  
 When first amang the yellow corn  
     A man I reckon'd was,  
 And wi' the lave<sup>3</sup> ilk merry morn  
     Could rank my rig and lass,  
     Still shearing and clearing  
     The tither stooked raw<sup>4</sup>  
     Wi' clauvers an' halvers<sup>5</sup>  
     Wearing the day awa

Ev'n then a wish (I mind its power),  
 A wish that to my latest hour  
     Shall strongly heave my breast  
 That I for poor auld Scotland's sake,  
 Some usefu plan, or book could make  
     Or sing a sang at least.

tired.  
 the other row of shocks.

uncommonly  
<sup>3</sup> gossip.

rest.  
 nonsense.

The rough bur-thistle, spreading wide  
 Amang the bearded bear<sup>1</sup>,  
 I turned the weeding-hook aside,  
 An' spared the symbol dear  
 No nation, no station,  
 My envy e'er could raise ;  
 A Scot still, but<sup>2</sup> blot still,  
 I knew nae higher praise

But still the elements o' sang  
 In formless jumble, right an' wrang,  
 Wild floated in my brain ,  
 'Till on that har'st I said before,  
 My partner in the merry core,  
 She roused the forming strain .  
 I see her yet, the sonsie<sup>3</sup> quean,  
 That lighted up my jingle,  
 Her witching smile, her pauky<sup>4</sup> een,  
 That gart<sup>5</sup> my heart-strings tingle ,  
 I fired, inspired,  
 At ev'ry kindling leek<sup>6</sup>,  
 But bashing, and dashing,  
 I feared aye to speak.

#### THE BIRKS OF ABERFELDY.

Bonnie lassie, will ye go,  
 Will ye go, will ye go,  
 Bonnie lassie, will ye go,  
 To the Birks of Aberfeldy?

Now simmer blinks on flowery braes,  
 And o'er the crystal streamlet plays,  
 Come let us spend the lightsome days  
 In the Birks of Aberfeldy

While o'er their heads the hazels hing,  
 The little birdies blithely sing,  
 Or lightly flit on wanton wing,  
 In the Birks of Aberfeldy

<sup>1</sup> barley<sup>2</sup> without<sup>3</sup> comely<sup>4</sup> sly<sup>5</sup> made.<sup>6</sup> look

The braes ascend like lofty wa's,  
 The foaming stream deep roaring fa's,  
 O'er hung wi' fragrant spreading shaws,  
 The Birks of Aberfeldy

The hoary cliffs are crown'd wi' flowers,  
 White o'er the linn the burnie pours,  
 And, rising, weets wi' misty showers  
 The Birks of Aberfeldy

Let fortune's gifts at random flee,  
 They ne'er shall draw a wish frae me,  
 Supremely blest wi' love and thee,  
 In the Birks of Aberfeldy

#### OF A THE AIRTS THE WIND CAN BLOW

*Tune*—Miss Admiral Gordon's Strathspey

Of a the airts<sup>1</sup> the wind can blow,  
 I dearly like the west,  
 For there the bonie lassie lives,  
 The lassie I loe best;  
 There wild woods grow, and rivers rove  
 And mony a hill between;  
 By day and night my fancy's flight  
 Is ever wi' my Jean.

I see her in the dewy flowers,  
 I see her sweet and fair  
 I hear her in the tunefu' birds,  
 I hear her charm the air  
 There's not a bonie flower that springs  
 By fountain, shaw<sup>2</sup> or green  
 There's not a bonie bird that sings,  
 but minds me o' my Jean.

<sup>1</sup> quarters.

<sup>2</sup> wood.

## AULD LANG SYNE.

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,  
And never brought to mind?  
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,  
And days o' lang syne?

*Chorus*

For auld lang syne, my dear,  
For auld lang syne,  
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,  
For auld lang syne

And surely ye'll be your pint-stowp,  
And surely I'll be mine,  
And we'll tak a cup of kindness yet  
For auld lang syne.  
For auld, &c.

We twa hae run about the braes,  
And pu'd the gowans<sup>1</sup> fine,  
But we've wander'd mony a weary foot  
Sin' auld lang syne.  
For auld, &c.

We twa hae paidl'd i' the burn,  
From morning sun till dine,  
But seas between us braid hae roar'd  
Sin' auld lang syne.  
For auld, &c.

And here's a hand, my trusty fere<sup>2</sup>,  
And gie's a hand o' thine,  
And we'll tak a right guid willie-waught<sup>3</sup>,  
For auld lang syne  
For auld, &c.

<sup>1</sup> daisies<sup>2</sup> companion.<sup>3</sup> draught

## JOHN ANDERSON MY JO.

John Anderson my jo John,  
 When we were first acquent,  
 Your locks were like the raven,  
 Your bonie brow was brent<sup>1</sup>  
 But now your brow is beld John,  
 Your locks are like the snaw  
 But blessings on your frosty pow  
 John Anderson, my jo.

John Anderson my jo, John,  
 We clamb the hill thegither  
 And monie a canty<sup>2</sup> day John,  
 We've had wi' ane anither  
 Now we maun totter down, John,  
 But hand in hand we'll go,  
 And sleep thegither at the foot,  
 John Anderson, my jo.

## TAM GLEN

*Tune*— The mucking o' Geordie's Byre.

My heart is a breaking dear Tittle,  
 Some counsel unto me come len  
 To anger them a is a pity;  
 But what will I do wi' Tam Glen?

I'm thinking wi' sic a braw fellow  
 In poortlith<sup>4</sup> I might mak a sen'<sup>5</sup>;  
 What care I in riches to wallow  
 If I maunna marry Tam Glen?

There's Lowrie the laird o' Dumeller,  
 'Guld-day to you, —brute! he comes ben:  
 He brags and he blaws o' his siller  
 But when will he dance like Tam Glen?

smooth.

bald.

cheerful.

<sup>4</sup> poverty

make a shift

My minnie does constantly deave<sup>1</sup> me,  
 And bids me beware o' young men,  
 They flatter, she says, to deceive me,  
 But wha can think sae o' Tam Glen?

My daddie says, gin I'll forsake him,  
 He'll gie me gude hunder marks ten  
 But, if it's ordained I maun take him,  
 O wha will I get but Tam Glen?

Yestreen at the Valentine's dealing,  
 My heart to my mou gied a sten<sup>2</sup>  
 For thrice I drew ane without failing,  
 And thrice it was written, Tam Glen

The last Halloween I was waukin<sup>3</sup>  
 My droukit<sup>4</sup> sark-sleeve, as ye ken,  
 His likeness cam up the house staukin,  
 And the very grey breeks o' Tam Glen!

Come counsel, dear Tittie, don't tarry,  
 I'll gie ye my bonie black hen,  
 Gif ye will advise me to marry  
 The lad I lo'e dearly, Tam Glen.

### THE HAPPY TRIO

*Tune*—'Willie brew'd a peck o' maut.'

O, Willie brewed a peck o' maut,  
 And Rob and Allan cam to see,  
 Three blyther hearts, that lee-lang<sup>5</sup> night,  
 Ye wad na found in Christendie

#### *Chorus*

We are na fou, we're no that fou,  
 But just a drappie in our ee,  
 The cock may crawl, the day may daw,  
 And ay we'll taste the barley bree.

<sup>1</sup> deafen

<sup>2</sup> leap

<sup>3</sup> watching

<sup>4</sup> wet

<sup>5</sup> live-long

Here are we met, three merry boys,  
 Three merry boys, I trow, are we  
 And mony a night we've merry been,  
 And mony mae we hope to be!  
 We are na fou &c

It is the moon, I ken her horn,  
 That's blinkin in the lift sae hie  
 She shines sae bright to wyle us hame,  
 But by my sooth she'll wait a wee!  
 We are na fou &c

Wha first shall rise to gang awa,  
 A cuckold, coward loun is he!  
 Wha first beside his chair shall fa,  
 He is the King among us three!  
 We are na fou, &c.

#### TO MARY IN HEAVEN

*Trans—* Miss Forbes' Farewell to Banff

Thou ling'ring star, with less'ning ray,  
 That lov'st to greet the early morn  
 Again thou usher'st in the day  
 My Mary from my soul was torn.  
 O Mary! dear departed shade!  
 Where is thy place of blissful rest?  
 Seest thou thy lover lowly laid?  
 Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

That sacred hour can I forget,  
 Can I forget the hallow'd grove,  
 Where by the winding Ayr we met,  
 To live one day of parting love!  
 Eternity will not efface  
 Those records dear of transports past  
 Thy image at our last embrace;  
 Ah! little thought we 'twas our last!

Ayr gurgling kissed his pebbled shore,  
 O'erhung with wild woods, thick'ning green,  
 The fragrant birch, and hawthorn hoar,  
 Twined am'rous round the raptured scene.  
 The flowers sprang wanton to be prest,  
 The birds sang love on ev'ry spray,—  
 Till too, too soon, the glowing west  
 Proclaim'd the speed of winged day  
 Still o'er these scenes my mem'ry wakes,  
 And fondly broods with miser care,  
 Time but th' impression deeper makes,  
 As streams their channels deeper wear  
 My Mary, dear departed shade '  
 Where is thy place of blissful rest?  
 Seest thou thy lover lowly laid?  
 Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

#### TAM O' SHANTER. A TALE.

Of Brownies and of Bogies full is this Buke  
*Gavin Douglas*

When chapman billies<sup>1</sup> leave the street,  
 And drouthy neibors, neibors meet,  
 As market-days are wearing late,  
 An' folk begin to tak the gate<sup>2</sup>,  
 While we sit bousing at the nappy<sup>3</sup>,  
 An' getting fou and unco happy,  
 We thinkna on the lang Scots miles,  
 The mosses, waters, slaps<sup>4</sup>, and stiles,  
 That lie between us and our hame,  
 Where sits our sulky, sullen dame,  
 Gathering her brows like gathering storm,  
 Nursing her wrath to keep it warm  
 This truth fand honest Tam O' Shanter,  
 As he frae Ayr ae night did canter  
 (Auld Ayr, whom ne'er a town surpasses  
 For honest men and bonie lasses)

<sup>1</sup> pedlar fellows

<sup>2</sup> road.

<sup>3</sup> ale.

<sup>4</sup> gaps in fences

O Tam! hadst thou but been sae wise,  
 As taen thy ain wife Kate's advice!  
 She tauld thee weel thou wast a skellum<sup>1</sup>  
 A blethering blustering, drunken blellum<sup>2</sup>;  
 That frae November till October  
 Ae market-day thou was nae sober;  
 That lika melder, wi' the miller  
 Thou sat as lang as thou had siller  
 That ev'ry naig was cad a shoe on,  
 The smith and thee gat roaring fou on;  
 That at the Lord's house, ev'n on Sunday  
 Thou drank wi' Kirkton<sup>3</sup> Jean till Monday  
 She prophesied that, late or soon,  
 Thou wad be found deep drowned in Doon;  
 Or catch'd wi' warlocks<sup>4</sup> in the mirk<sup>5</sup>  
 By Alloway's auld haunted kirk.

Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet<sup>6</sup>  
 To think how mony counsels sweet,  
 How mony lengthen'd, sage advices,  
 The husband frae the wife despises!

But to our tale Ae market night,  
 Tam had got planted unco right,  
 Fast by an ingle, bleedin' finely,  
 Wi' reaming swats<sup>7</sup>, that drank divinely  
 And at his elbow Souter Johnie,  
 His ancient, trusty drouthy crony  
 Tam lo'ed him like a very brither  
 They had been fou for weeks thegither.  
 The night drave on wi' sangs and clatter;  
 And ay the ale was growin' better  
 The landlady and Tam grew gracious,  
 Wi' favours, secret, sweet, and precious:  
 The souter<sup>8</sup> tauld his queerest stories  
 The landlord's laugh was ready chorus:  
 The storm without might rair and rustle,  
 Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.

knave.      idle talker      <sup>6</sup> every time he went to get grain ground.

Kirkton is the distinct name of a village in which the parish kirk stands.

<sup>7</sup> wizards.      dark.      makes me weep.      frothing ale.      shoemaker

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,  
 E'en drowned himself amang the nappy<sup>1</sup>  
 As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,  
 The minutes winged their way wi' pleasure.  
 Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,  
 O'er a' the ills o' life victorious<sup>1</sup>

But pleasures are like poppies spread,  
 You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed,  
 Or like the snow falls in the river,  
 A moment white—then melts for ever,  
 Or like the borealis race,  
 That flit ere you can point their place;  
 Or like the rainbow's lovely form  
 Evanishing amid the storm  
 Nae man can tether time or tide,—  
 The hour approaches Tam maun ride,  
 That hour, o' night's black arch the ley stane,  
 That dreary hour he mounts his beast in,  
 And sic a night he takes the rood in,  
 As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in

The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last,  
 The rattling show'rs rose on the blast,  
 The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd,  
 Loud, deep, and lang, the thunder bellow'd  
 That night, a child might understand,  
 The Deil had business on his hand

Weel mounted on his grey mare, Meg,  
 A better never lifted leg,  
 Tam skelpit<sup>1</sup> on thro' dub<sup>2</sup> and mire,  
 Despising wind, and rain, and fire,  
 Whiles holding fast his gude blue bonnet,  
 Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet;  
 Whiles glow'ring round wi' prudent cares,  
 Lest bogles catch him unawares,  
 Kirk Alloway was drawing nigh,  
 Where ghaists and houlets<sup>3</sup> nightly cry

By this time he was cross the ford,  
 Where in the snaw the chapman smoores<sup>4</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> burned<sup>2</sup> puddle<sup>3</sup> owls<sup>4</sup> was smothered.

And past the birks<sup>1</sup> and meikle<sup>2</sup> stane,  
 Where drunken Charlie brak's neck bane:  
 And thro' the whins, and by the cairn,  
 Where hunters fand the murdered bairn  
 And near the thorn aboon the well,  
 Where Mungo's mither hanged hersel.  
 Before him Doon pours all his floods  
 The doubling storm roars thro' the woods;  
 The lightnings flash from pole to pole  
 Near and more near the thunders roll  
 When, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,  
 Kirk Alloway seemed in a breeze  
 Thro' ilka bore<sup>3</sup> the beams were glancing  
 And loud resounded mirth and dancing

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn!  
 What dangers thou canst make us scorn!  
 Wi' tippenny, we fear nae evil;  
 Wi' usquebae, we'll face the Devil!  
 The swats sae ream'd in Tammie's noddle,  
 Fair play he car'd na dells a boddle!<sup>4</sup>  
 But Maggie stood right sair astonished,  
 Till, by the heel and hand admonished,  
 She ventured forward on the light  
 And, wow! Tam saw an unco sight!  
 Warlocks and witches in a dance;  
 Nae cotillion brent new frae France,  
 But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,  
 Put life and mettle in their heels.  
 At winnock bunker<sup>5</sup> in the east,  
 There sat old Nick, in shape o' beast  
 A towzie<sup>6</sup> tyke<sup>7</sup> black, grim, and large,  
 To gie them music was his charge  
 He screw'd the pipes and gart<sup>8</sup> them skirl<sup>9</sup>,  
 Till roof and rafters a did dirl!<sup>10</sup>—  
 Coffins stood round, like open presses,  
 That shaw'd the dead in their last dresses;

<sup>1</sup> birches.<sup>2</sup> shaggy

big

dog

hole in the wall.

forced.

dolt.

scream.

window-seat.

<sup>10</sup> thrill.

And by some devilish cantrip<sup>1</sup> slight  
 Lach in its cauld hand held a light,—  
 By which heroic Tam was able  
 To note upon the haly table,  
 A murderer's banes in gibbet airns<sup>2</sup>,  
 Twa span-lang, wee, unchristen'd barns;  
 A thief, new-cutted frae a rape,  
 Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape,  
 Five tomahawks, wi' blude red rusted,  
 Five scymitars, wi' murder crusted,  
 A garter, which a babe had strangled,  
 A knife, a father's throat had mangled,  
 Whom his ain son o' life bereft,  
 The grey hairs yet stack to the heft,  
 Wi' mair of horrible and awfu',  
 Which ev'n to name wad be unlawfu'

As Tammie glow'd, amazed and curious,  
 The mirth and fun grew fast and furious  
 The piper loud and louder blew,  
 The dancers quick and quicker flew,  
 They reeled, they set, they crossed, they cleekit,  
 Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,  
 And coost her duddies<sup>3</sup> to the wark,  
 And linket<sup>4</sup> at it in her sark<sup>1</sup>

Now Tam, O Tam, had thae been queans  
 A' plump and strapping in their teens,  
 Their sarks, instead o' creeshie<sup>5</sup> flannen,  
 Been snaw-white seventeen-hunder linnen<sup>6</sup>!  
 Thir<sup>7</sup> breeks o' mine, my only pair,  
 That ance were plush, o' gude blue hair,  
 I wad hae gi'en them off my hurdies<sup>8</sup>,  
 For ae blink o' the bonnie burdies<sup>1</sup>

But wither'd beldams, auld and droll,  
 Rigwoodie hags, wad spean<sup>9</sup> a foal,  
 Lowping and flinging on a crummock<sup>10</sup>,  
 I wonder didna turn thy stomach

<sup>1</sup> magic.<sup>2</sup> irons<sup>3</sup> clothes<sup>4</sup> linked<sup>5</sup> greasy<sup>6</sup> The manufacturing term for a fine linen, woven in a reed of 1700 divisions — *Cromek*<sup>7</sup> these.<sup>8</sup> loins<sup>9</sup> wean<sup>10</sup> short staff

But Tam kend what was what fu' brawlie,  
 There was ae winsome wench and walie,  
 That night enlisted in the core,  
 (Lang after kend on Carrick shore ;  
 For mony a beast to dead she shot,  
 And perished mony a bonie boat,  
 And shook baith meikle corn and bear ,  
 And kept the country-side in fear )  
 Her cutty<sup>1</sup> sark, o Paisley harn<sup>2</sup>  
 That, while a lassie, she had worn,  
 In longitude tho sorely scanty  
 It was her best, and she was vauntie.—  
 Ah ! little kend thy reverend grannie,  
 That sark she cost<sup>3</sup> for her wee Nannie,  
 Wi twa pund Scots, ('twas a her riches,)  
 Wad ever graced a dance of witches !

But here my muse her wing maun cour :  
 Sic flights are far beyond her power  
 To sing how Nannie lap and flang  
 (A souple jade she was, and strang),  
 And how Tam stood, like a bewitched,  
 And thought his very een enriched  
 Even Satan glowr'd and fidg'd fu' fain,  
 And hotch'd and blew wi might and main  
 Till first ae caper syne<sup>4</sup> anither  
 Tam tint<sup>5</sup> his reason a thegither  
 And roars out, 'Weel done, Cutty sark !  
 And in an instant all was dark ;  
 And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,  
 When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees bliz out wi angry fyke<sup>6</sup>  
 When plundering herds assail their byke<sup>7</sup>  
 As open pussie's mortal foes,  
 When, pop ! she starts before their nose  
 As eager runs the market-crowd,  
 When 'Catch the thief !' resounds aloud  
 So Maggie runs, the witches follow  
 Wl' monie an eldritch skreech and hollow

<sup>1</sup> barley

short.

lost.

Very coarse linen.

bustle.

ought.

hive.

then

Ah, Tam! ah, Tam! thou'll get thy fairin'  
 In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin'  
 In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin'  
 Kate soon will be a woefu' woman!  
 Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,  
 And win the key-stane<sup>1</sup> of the brig,  
 There at them thou thy tail may toss,  
 A running stream they darena cross  
 But ere the key-stane she could make,  
 The fient<sup>2</sup> a tail she had to shake!  
 For Nannie, far before the rest,  
 Hard upon noble Maggie prest,  
 And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle<sup>3</sup>,  
 But little wist she Maggie's mettle—  
 Ae spring brought off her master hale,  
 But left behind her ain gray tail  
 The carlin claught her by the rump,  
 And left poor Maggie scarce a stump  
 Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,  
 Ilk man and mother's son, tak heed,  
 Whene'er to drink you are inclined,  
 Or cutty-sarks run in your mind,  
 Think, ye may buy the joys o'er dear,  
 Remember Tam o' Shanter's mare.

### THE BANKS O' DOON

*Tune*—'The Caledonian Hunt's delight.'

Ye banks and braes o' bonie Doon,  
 How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair!  
 How can ye chant, ye little birds,  
 And I sae weary fu' o' care!

<sup>1</sup> It is a well-known fact, that witches, or any evil spirits, have no power to follow a poor wight any farther than the middle of the next running stream. It may be proper likewise to mention to the benighted traveller, that when he falls in with bogles, whatever danger may be in his going forward, there is much more hazard in turning back.—R. B.

<sup>2</sup> deuce (fiend)

<sup>3</sup> aim.

Thou'lt break my heart, thou warbling bird,  
 That wantons thro' the flowering thorn  
 Thou minds me o' departed joys,  
 Departed—never to return.

Aft hae I rov'd by bonie Doon,  
 To see the rose and woodbine twine;  
 And ilka bird sang o' its luvie,  
 And fondly sae did I o' mine.  
 Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,  
 Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree;  
 And my fause luvier staw<sup>1</sup> my rose,  
 But ah! he left the thorn wi' me.

#### FAREWELL TO NANCY

Ae fond kiss, and then we sever!  
 Ae farewell, alas, for ever!  
 Deep in heart wrung tears I'll pledge thee!  
 Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.  
 Who shall say that fortune grieves him,  
 While the star of hope she leaves him?  
 Me, nae cheerful twinkle lights me  
 Dark despair around benlights me.

I'll ne'er blame my partial fancy  
 Naething could resist my Nancy;  
 But to see her was to love her  
 Love but her and love for ever  
 Had we never loved sae kindly,  
 Had we never loved sae blindly,  
 Never met—or never parted,  
 We had ne'er been broken hearted!

Fare thee weel, thou first and fairest!  
 Fare thee weel, thou best and dearest!  
 Thine be ilka joy and treasure,  
 Peace, enjoyment, love, and pleasure.

<sup>1</sup> stole.

Ac fond kiss, and then we sever,  
Ac fareweel, alas, for ever!  
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,  
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.

### HIGHLAND MARY

*Tune*—'Katharine Ogie'

Ye banks, and braes, and streams around  
The castle o' Montgomery,  
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,  
Your waters never drumlie '!  
There simmer first unfauld her robes,  
And there the langest tarry,  
For there I took the last fareweel  
O' my sweet Highland Mary

How sweetly bloomed the gay green birk,  
How rich the hawthorn's blossom,  
As underneath their fragrant shade  
I clasped her to my bosom!  
The golden hours, on angel wings,  
Flew o'er me and my dearie,  
For dear to me, as light and life,  
Was my sweet Highland Mary

Wi' monie a vow, and locked embrace,  
Our parting was fu' tender,  
And, pledging aft to meet again,  
We tore oursels asunder,  
But oh! fell death's untimely frost,  
That nipt my flower sae early!  
Now green's the sod, and cauld's the clay  
That wraps my Highland Mary!

' muddy

O pale, pale now those rosy lips,  
 I aft hae kissed sae fondly!  
 And closed for ay the sparkling glance,  
 That dwelt on me sae kindly!  
 And mould'ring now in silent dust,  
 That heart that loed me dearly!  
 But still within my bosom's core  
 Shall live my Highland Mary

## DUNCAN GRAY

Duncan Gray came here to woo,  
 Ha, ha, the wooing o't,  
 On blythe yule night when we were fou,  
 Ha, ha, the wooing o't.  
 Maggie coost<sup>1</sup> her head fu' high,  
 Looked asklent and unco skeigh<sup>2</sup>,  
 Gart poor Duncan stand abelgh<sup>3</sup>  
 Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

Duncan fleeched<sup>4</sup> and Duncan prayed  
 Ha, ha, &c.

Meg was deaf as Ailsa Craig  
 Ha, ha, &c.

Duncan sighed baith out and in,  
 Grat<sup>5</sup> his een baith bleer't and blin  
 Spak o' lowpin' o'er a linn ;  
 Ha, ha, &c.

Time and chance are but a tide,  
 Ha, ha, &c.

Slighted love is sair to bide,  
 Ha, ha, &c.

Shall I like a fool, quoth he,  
 For a haughty hizzie dee?  
 She may gae to—France for me!  
 Ha, ha, &c.

<sup>1</sup> tossed.  
 wept.

proud.

bleared and blind.

At a shy distance.

leaping

besought.

precipice.

How it comes let doctors tell,  
 Ha, ha, &c.  
 Meg grew sick—as he grew hale,  
 Ha, ha, &c.  
 Something in her bosom wrings,  
 For relief a sigh she brings,  
 And O, her een, they spak sic things!  
 Ha, ha, &c.

Duncan was a lad o' grace,  
 Ha, ha, &c.  
 Maggie's was a piteous case,  
 Ha, ha, &c.  
 Duncan couldna be her death,  
 Swelling pity smoor'd<sup>1</sup> his wrath,  
 Now they're crouse and cantie<sup>2</sup> baith,  
 Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

#### WHISTLE, AND I'LL COME TO YE, MY LAD

O whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad,  
 O whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad  
 Tho' father and mither and a' should gae mad,  
 O whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad.

But warily tent, when ye come to court me,  
 And comena unless the back-yett<sup>3</sup> be a-jee<sup>4</sup>,  
 Syne<sup>5</sup> up the back stile, and let naebody see,  
 And come as ye werena comin to me.  
 And come as ye werena comin to me.  
 O whistle, &c

At Kirk, or at market, whene'er ye meet me,  
 Gang by me as tho' that ye caredna a flee.  
 But steal me a blink o' your bonnie black e'e,  
 Yet look as ye werena lookin at me.  
 Yet look as ye werena lookin at me.  
 O whistle, &c.

<sup>1</sup> smothered<sup>2</sup> cheerful and merry<sup>3</sup> gate<sup>4</sup> ajar<sup>5</sup> then.

Aye vow and protest that ye carena for me,  
 And whiles ye may lightly my beauty a wee;  
 But courtna anither, tho' jokin ye be,  
 For fear that she wyle your fancy frae me.  
 For fear that she wyle your fancy frae me.  
 O whistle, &c.

# BANNOCKBURN ROBERT BRUCE'S ADDRESS TO HIS ARMY

*Thou—* Hey tuttle tattle.

Scots, wha hae wif Wallace bled,  
 Scots, wham Bruce has aften led;  
 Welcome to your gory bed,  
 Or to victorie.

Now's the day and now's the hour;  
 See the front o' battle lower;  
 See approach proud Edward's power—  
 Chains and slavery!

Wha will be a traitor knave?  
 Wha can fill a coward's grave?  
 Wha sae base as be a slave?  
 Let him turn and flee!

Wha for Scotland's King and law  
 Freedom's sword will strongly draw,  
 Free man stand, or free-man fa?  
 Let him on wi me!

By oppression's woes and pains!  
 By your sons in servile chains!  
 We will drain our dearest veins,  
 But they *shall* be free!

Lay the proud usurpers low!  
 Tyrants fall in every foe!  
 Liberty's in every blow!  
 Let us do, or die!

## A RED, RED ROSE.

*Tune*—'Wishaw a Favourite'

My luvie is like a red, red rose  
That's newly sprung in June  
My luvie is like the melodie  
That's sweetly played in tune.

As fair thou art, my bonie lass,  
So deep in luvie am I  
And I will luvie thee still, my dear,  
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,  
And the rocks melt wi' the sun.  
I will luvie thee still, my dear,  
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only luvie!  
And fare thee weel awhile!  
And I will come again, my luvie,  
Tho it were ten thousand mile

## MY NANIE'S AWA.

*Tune*—'There'll never be peace till Jamie comes Hame'

Now in her green mantle blythe Nature arrays,  
And listens the lambkins that bleat o'er the braes,  
While birds warble welcome in ilka green shaw,  
But to me it's delightless—my Nanie's awa.

The snaw-drap and primrose our woodlands adorn,  
And violets bathe in the weat o' the morn.  
They pain my sad bosom, sae sweetly they blaw,  
They mind me o' Nanie—and Nanie's awa.

Thou lav'rock<sup>1</sup> that springs frae the dew's o' the lawn,  
 The shepherd to warn o' the grey breaking dawn,  
 And thou mellow mavis that hails the night fa,  
 Give over for pty—my Nanie's awa.

Come Autumn sae pensive, in yellow and gray,  
 And soothe me wi tidings o nature's decay  
 The dark, dreary Winter and wild-driving snaw  
 Alane can delight me—now Nanie's awa.

### A MAN'S A MAN FOR A THAT.

Is there, for honest poverty  
 That hings his head, and a that?  
 The coward-slave, we pass him by  
 We dare be poor for a that!  
 For a that and a that,  
 Our toils obscure, and a that;  
 The rank is but the guinea stamp;  
 The man's the gowd for a that.

What tho' on hamely fare we dine,  
 Wear hoddin-grey<sup>2</sup> and a that  
 Gle fools their silks, and knaves their wine,  
 A man's a man, for a that.  
 For a that and a that,  
 Their tinsel show, and a that:  
 The honest man, tho' e'er sae poor,  
 Is king o' men for a that.

Ye see yon birkie<sup>3</sup> ca'd a lord,  
 Wha struts, and stares, and a that;  
 Tho hundreds worship at his word,  
 He's but a coof<sup>4</sup> for a that  
 For a that, an a that,  
 His riband, star and a that,  
 The man of independent mind,  
 He looks and laughs at a that.

<sup>1</sup> lark.    <sup>2</sup> coarse woollen cloth.    <sup>3</sup> conceited fellow    <sup>4</sup> blockhead.

A prince can mak a belted knight,  
 A marquis, duke, and a' that ,  
 But an honest man's aboon his might,  
 Gude faith, he mauna fa'<sup>1</sup> that !  
 For a' that, and a' that,  
 Their dignities and a' that,  
 The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,  
 Are higher rank than a' that

Then let us pray that come it may, ,  
 As come it will for a' that ,  
 That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,  
 May bear the gree<sup>2</sup>, and a' that ,  
 For a' that, and a' that,  
 It's coming yet, for a' that ,  
 That man to man, the world o'er,  
 Shall brothers be for a' that.

#### ADDRESS TO THE WOODLARK.

O stay, sweet warbling wood-lark, stay,  
 Nor quit for me the trembling spray ,  
 A hapless lover courts thy lay,  
 Thy soothing fond complaining.

Again, again that tender part,  
 That I may catch thy melting art ;  
 For surely that wad touch her heart,  
 Wha kills me wi' disdainin

Say, was thy little mate unkind,  
 And heard thee as the careless wind?  
 Oh, nocht but love and sorrow joined  
 Sic notes o' wae could wauken.

<sup>1</sup> manage.

<sup>2</sup> pre-eminence.

Thou tells o' never-ending care ;  
 O speechless grief, and dark despair  
 For pity's sake, sweet bird, nae mair !  
 Or my poor heart is broken !

### THIS IS NO MY AIN LASSIE.

*Time*— This is no my ain House.

This is no my ain lassie,  
 Fair tho' the lassie be ;  
 Weel ken I my ain lassie,  
 Kind love is in her e'e.

I see a form, I see a face,  
 Ye weel may wi<sup>1</sup> the fairest place :  
 It wants, to me, the witching grace,  
 The kind love that s in her e'e.  
 This is no, &c.

She's bonie, blooming, straight, and tall,  
 And lang has had my heart in thrall ;  
 And aye it charms my very saul,  
 The kind love that s in her e'e  
 This is no, &c.

A thief sae pawkle<sup>2</sup> is my Jean,  
 To steal a blink, by a' unseen ;  
 But gleg<sup>3</sup> as light are lovers' een,  
 When kind love is in the e'e.  
 This is no, &c.

It may escape the courtly sparks,  
 It may escape the learned clerks ;  
 But weel the watching lover marks  
 The kind love that's in her e'e.  
 This is no, &c.

<sup>1</sup> win.

<sup>2</sup> cunning

<sup>3</sup> quick.

## LAST MAY A BRAW WOOLER.

*Tune*—'The Lothian Lassie'

Last May a braw wooer cam down the lang glen,  
 And sair wi' his love he did deave me,  
 I said there was naething I hated like men,  
 The deuce gae wi'm to believe me, believe me,  
 The deuce gae wi'm to believe me.

He spak o' the darts in my bonie black een,  
 And vowed for my love he was diein',  
 I said he might die when he liket for Jean:  
 The Lord forgie me for him, for him,  
 The Lord forgie me for him

A weel-stocked mailen<sup>1</sup>, himsel for the laird,  
 And marriage aff-hand, were his proffers  
 I never loot on<sup>2</sup> that I kenned it, or cared,  
 But thought I might hae waur<sup>3</sup> offers, waur offers,  
 But thought I might hae waur offers

But what wad ye think? in a fortnight or less,  
 The deil tak his taste to gae near her!  
 He up the lang loan<sup>4</sup> to my black cousin Bess,  
 Guess ye how, the jad! I could bear her, could bear her,  
 Guess ye how, the jad! I could bear her

But a' the neist week as I fretted wi' care,  
 I gaed to the tryste<sup>5</sup> o' Dalgarnock,  
 And wha but my fine fickle lover was there!  
 I glowred as I'd seen a warlock, a warlock,  
 I glowred as I'd seen a warlock

But owre my left shouther I gae him a blink,  
 Lest neibors might say I was saucy,  
 My wooer he capered as he'd been in drink,  
 And vowed I was his dear lassie, dear lassie,  
 And vowed I was his dear lassie.

<sup>1</sup> farm<sup>2</sup> let out.<sup>3</sup> worse<sup>4</sup> green lane, the same word as *loaning*<sup>5</sup> market.

I spier'd<sup>1</sup> for my counsln fa' couthy<sup>2</sup> and sweet,  
 Gin she had recovered her hearin',  
 And how her new shoon fit her auld shachl't<sup>3</sup> feet—  
 But Heavens! how he fell a swearin', a swearin',  
 But Heavens! how he fell a swearin'.

He begged, for Gudesake, I wad be his wife,  
 Or else I wad kill him wi' sorrow  
 So e'en to preserve the poor body in life,  
 I think I maun wed him to-morrow, to-morrow  
 I think I maun wed him to-morrow

### O WERT THOU IN THE CAULD BLAST

*Tune— The Lass of Livingstone.*

O, wert thou in the cauld blast,  
 On yonder lea, on yonder lea;  
 My plaidie to the angry air<sup>4</sup>,  
 I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee;  
 Or did misfortune's bitter storms  
 Around thee blaw around thee blaw,  
 Thy bield<sup>5</sup> should be my bosom,  
 To share it a, to share it a  
 Or were I in the wildest waste,  
 Sae black and bare, sae black and bare,  
 The desert were a paradise,  
 If thou wert there, if thou wert there.  
 Or were I monarch o' the globe,  
 W'ld thee to reign, wi' thee to reign,  
 The brightest jewel in my crown,  
 Wad be my queen, wad be my queen.

<sup>1</sup> asked.

kind.

twisted.

direction of the wind.

<sup>5</sup> shelter

# CAROLINE OLIPHANT

(BARONESS NAIRN)

[LADY NAIRN WAS born in 1766. Though she lived to an advanced age, dying in 1845, most of her songs were written early in life, soon after the appearance of Burns's poems in 1787. The first and only collected edition of her works appeared in 1869, but for two generations before, songs of her composing had been sung in every Scotch household and concert room, though the name of the author was unknown. A surprising number of the most familiar Scotch songs, many of them popularly believed to have descended from remote antiquity, were written by Lady Nairn—*The Land o' the Leal, The Laird o' Cockpen, Call'er Herrin, The Auld House, Hunting-Tower, John Tod, Wha'll be King but Charlie? Charlie is my darling, Will ye no come back again? He's ower the hills that I loe weel, I will sit in my wee croo house*.]

Like another Scotch lady, the authoress of *Auld Robin Gray*, Miss Oliphant was first moved to song-writing by the desire of rescuing fine old tunes from coarse themes. This is her own account of the beginning of her poetic impulse, she saw, she says, with admiration how Burns was fitting popular melodies with worthy words, and longed to help him in the good work. That this object should have mixed with her poetic impulses is characteristic of her training, but no songs written with or without a moral object were ever more spontaneous in their lyric flow, more free from artificiality. Two great motives may be distinguished in her verse—sympathy with the life of the common people among whom she moved with old-fashioned familiarity as a radiant comforter and joy-bringer, and sympathy with the chivalrous spirit of Jacobitism, which was the air she breathed in her own family. Her songs contain all that is best and highest in the Jacobite poetry of Scotland,—the tender regret that never sinks into wailing, the high-tempered gaiety that bends but will not break, the fiery spirit that reaches forward to victory and never thinks of defeat. It was a misfortune for the Pretender that such a poet-

laureate of his cause did not appear till forty years after that cause was hopelessly lost. Lady Nairn's Jacobite songs—she did not receive her title till her husband's attainder was removed in 1824—were written for the consolation of an aged kinsman who had followed 'Prince Charlie's' fortunes in 1745. Her grandfather Oliphant of Gask, had been 'out' in 1715 as well as 1745 and of her father the Pretender wrote— He is as worthy a subject as I have, and his family never deroged from their principals. The atmosphere of sincere and chivalrous Jacobitism in which she was nurtured accounts in no small measure for the intense air of reality in her songs.

W. MINTO

## WHA 'LL BE KING BUT CHARLIE?

The news frae Moidart cam' yestreen  
Will soon gar mony ferlie',  
For ships o' war hae just come in  
And landit Royal Charlie

Come through the heather, around him gather,  
Ye're a' th' welcomer early,  
Around him cling wi' a' your kin,  
For wha 'll be King but Charlie?  
Come through the heather, around him gather,  
Come Ronald, come Donald, com a' thegither,  
And crown your rightfu' lawfu' King,  
For wha 'll be King but Charlie?

The Hieland clans, wi' sword in hand,  
Frae John o' Groats to Airlie,  
Hae to a man declared to stand,  
Or fa' wi' Royal Charlie,  
Come through the heather, &c.

The Lowlands a', baith great and sma',  
Wi mony a lord and laird, hae  
Declared for Scotia's King and law,  
And spier ye wha but Charlie?  
Come through the heather, &c.

There's nae a lass in a' the lan',  
But vows faith late an' early,  
She'll ne'er to man gie heart nor han',  
Wha wadna fecht for Charlie.  
Come through the heather, &c

Then here's a health to Charlie's cause,  
And be't complete an' early,  
His very name our hearts' blood warms,  
To arms for Royal Charlie!  
Come through the heather, &c.

<sup>1</sup> make many wonder

## THE LAND O' THE LEAL.

I'm wearin awa John,  
Like snaw wreaths in thaw John,  
I'm wearin awa  
    To the land o' the leal.  
There's nae sorrow there, John  
There's neither cauld nor care, John,  
The day is aye fair  
    In the land o' the leal.

Our bonnie bairn's there, John,  
She was baith gude and fair John  
And oh! we grudged her sair  
    To the land o' the leal.  
But sorrow's sel' wears past, John,  
And joy's a-comin fast, John,  
The joy that's aye to last  
    In the land o' the leal.

Sae dear that joy was bought, John,  
Sae free the battle fought, John,  
That sinfu man e'er brought  
    To the land o' the leal.  
Oh! dry your glistering e'e, John,  
My soul lang's to be free, John,  
And angels beckon me,  
    To the land o' the leal.

Oh! hand ye leal and true, John,  
Your day it's wearin through, John,  
And I'll welcome you  
    To the land o' the leal.  
Now fare ye weel, my ain John,  
This warld's cares are vain, John,  
We'll meet, and we'll be faim  
    In the land o' the leal.

## MRS. BARBAULD.

[ANNA LÆTITIA Aikin, was born at Kibworth Harcourt, in Leicestershire, 1743. Published *Poems*, 1773, *Miscellaneous Pieces in Prose* by J and A L Aikin, 1773. Married Rev Rochemont Barbauld, 1774. Published *Poetical Epistle to Mr Wilberforce*, 1791, *Hymns in Prose for Little Children*, 1811. Died at Stoke Newington, March 9, 1825.]

The poems of Mrs Barbauld are chiefly written in the elegant pseudo classic style of the close of the last century. She expresses herself clearly and with grace, a certain artificiality of manner harmonises with her choice of subject. Her poetry is without deep thought or passion, but it is free from blunders of an avoidable kind. The spirit of self-criticism which prompted her to destroy all her juvenile verses, never permitted her to include with her published works any ill-considered thought or unsuccessful effort. 'I had rather,' she declared, in answer to remonstrance, 'that it should be asked of twenty pieces why they are not here, than of one why it is.' The bulk of Mrs Barbauld's poetry is inspired by the trivial occasions of domestic life, and when she quits the personal vein, it is of Delia and Damon, of Sylvia and Corin, that she sings, pretty shepherdesses and tuneful shepherds, whose delicate pretence of loving claims no relation to the passions of reality. Such fancies move her to an airy playfulness, a charming feminine kind of humour. She is gay, but her gayest mood is without abandonment. Frequent allusions to the classic poets, quoted lines of Virgil, remind us that the poetess is also a learned lady, a school-mistress, and an authority on education.

The fame of Mrs Barbauld's hymns has outlived the rest of her work. Yet with the exception of her charming *Hymns in Prose for Little Children*, they seem, to a modern reader, deficient in fervour and in religious emotion. They are pure in tone and lofty, but often singularly cold. There can be no doubt, however, of their sincerity.

Mrs. Barbauld essayed her strength in one or two serious poems and epistles on political subjects. In the treatment of such themes she was not happy. It is only in her lighter moods that she is free from a certain complacent shallowness of sentiment which lessens the value of her work. This fault is less noticeable in her later poems, when age and sad experience had overcome her: yet even here, in only one of her lyrics, in the close of the *Ode to Life* do we meet with much real beauty of feeling. Towards the end of her days she composed the longest of her poems, *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven*. Her subject is the decline of British power, the transfer of European prestige to America, and it is not surprising that it was received with much disfavour. Nor were the public to be soothed by hearing that the 'ingenuous youth from the Blue Mountains or Ontario's Lake, forerunners of Lord Macaulay's New Zealander' should, making dutious pilgrimage to London's faded glories, enquire

Where all-accomplished Jones his race began.

Mrs. Barbauld could not forgive the public its ingratitude. She took a mild revenge in publishing no more poems, and the step, it may be, was a wise one. In the heyday of the Georgian revival, her academic little verses must have missed their accustomed praise. Her vaunted immortelles had already faded; I fear they will bear no more their golden flowers in any possible future.

A. MARY F. ROBINSON.

## ODE TO SPRING

Sweet daughter of a rough and stormy sire,  
Hoar Winter's blooming child, delightful Spring!  
Whose unshorn locks with leaves  
And swelling buds are crowned,

From the green islands of eternal youth,  
Crowned with fresh blooms and ever springing shade,  
Turn, hither turn thy step,  
O thou, whose powerful voice

More sweet than softest touch of Doric reed,  
Or Lydian flute, can soothe the madding winds,  
And through the stormy deep  
Breathe thine own tender calm

Thee, best beloved! the virgin train await  
With songs and festal rites, and joy to rove  
Thy blooming wilds among,  
And vales and dewy lawns,

With untired feet, and cull thy earliest sweet,  
To weave fresh garlands for the glowing brow  
Of him, the favoured youth  
That prompts their whispered sigh

Unlock thy copious stores,—those tender showers  
That drop their sweetness on the infant buds,  
And silent dews that swell  
The milky ear's green stem,

And feed the flowering osier's early shoots;  
And call those winds which through the whispering boughs  
With warm and pleasant breath  
Salute the blowing flowers

Now let me sit beneath the whitening thorn  
And mark thy spreading tints steal o'er the dale,  
And watch with patient eye  
Thy fair unfolding charms

O nymph approach! while yet the temperate sun  
With bashful forehead through the cool moist air  
Throws his young maiden beams,  
And with chaste kisses woos

The earth's fair bosom; while the streaming veil  
Of lucid clouds with wind and frequent shade  
Protects thy modest blooms  
From his severer blaze.

Sweet is thy reign, but short —the red dog star  
Shall scorch thy tresses, and the mower's scythe  
Thy greens, thy flowerets all  
Remorseless shall destroy

Reluctant shall I bid thee then farewell:  
For O not all that Autumn's lap contains,  
Nor Summer's ruddiest fruits,  
Can aught for thee atone,

Fair Spring! whose simplest promise more delights  
Than all their largest wealth, and through the heart  
Each joy and new born hope  
With softest influence breathes.

## LIFE.

*Animula, vagula, blandula.*

Life! I know not what thou art,  
But know that thou and I must part;  
And when, or how or where we met,  
I own to me's a secret yet.  
But this I know when thou art fled  
Where'er they lay these limbs, this head,  
No clod so valueless shall be  
As all that then remains of me.  
O whither whither dost thou fly  
Where bend unseen thy trackless course,  
And in this strange divorce,  
Ah, tell where I must seek this compound I?

To the vast ocean of empyreal flame  
From whence thy essence came  
Dost thou thy flight pursue, when freed  
From matter's base encumbering weed?  
Or dost thou, hid from sight,  
Wait, like some spell-bound knight,  
Through blank oblivious years the appointed hour  
To break thy trance and reassume thy power?  
Yet canst thou without thought or feeling be?  
O say what art thou when no more thou'rt thee?

Life! we've been long together,  
Through pleasant and through cloudy weather,  
'Tis hard to part when friends are dear;  
Perhaps 'twill cost a sigh, a tear,  
'Then steal away, give little warning,  
Choose thine own time,  
Say not Good night, but in some brighter clime  
Bid me Good morning

## GEORGE CRABBE

[GEORGE CRABBE was born at Aldborough in Suffolk, of poor parents, on the 24th of December 1754. He was apprenticed in his fourteenth year to a surgeon at Wickham Brook, near Bury St. Edmunds, and after completing his term actually practised at Aldborough. He was not however successful in his profession, and being reduced to great extremities, he determined to go to London, and to devote himself to literature, for which he had at an early age discovered a strong bent. For a long time he sought in vain for patronage, but was at length fortunate enough to attract the attention of Burke, through whose kindly influence *The Library* (1781) was favourably received by the public. In the same year he took orders, and two years later published *The Village* after first submitting it to the revision of Johnson. This work at once established his reputation; but instead of following up his success, for the period of twenty four years he published but one poem, *The Newspaper* (185) and devoted himself almost entirely to parish work. In 1807 appeared *The Parish Register* which was succeeded in 1810 by *The Borough* in 1812 by *Tales in Verse*, and in 1819 by *Tales of the Hall*. This was his last poetical work, though his death did not take place till February 3, 1832 thirteen years later.]

Crabbe's poems form a very distinct landmark in the course of English literature. Nothing is more noticeable in the latter part of the eighteenth century than the apparent exhaustion of poetical material. Poetry thrives in an agitated atmosphere. It languishes in a state of settled repose. For more than a century before the appearance of Crabbe the prevailing tone of English poetry had been political. The interest of the people had been absorbed in the establishment of their constitutional liberties, which they had secured at the price of civil war and a disputed succession, and what was felt in society was reflected in verse. The political passions of the period show themselves in different forms in the controversial satires of Dryden, in the personal satires of Pope, in the dramatic declamation of Addison, and at last in the more composed moralising of Johnson and Goldsmith. But by degrees, under a settled dynasty the air is cleared of serious

political storms And as the times become more quiet, we observe a rapid ebb in the inspiration of the poets who carried on the traditions peculiar to the eighteenth century Churchill is but a poor third in satire to Dryden and Pope, *The Traveller* and *The Vanity of Human Wishes* are ill replaced in the didactic class of poetry by Erasmus Darwin's frigid *Loves of the Plants*, or Payne Knight's *Progress of Society* In another direction the strong centrifugal tendency of poetry, afterwards so fully developed by the Lake School, first discovers itself in the solitary and meditative muse of Cowper, and in the Doric provincialism of Burns

Another feature equally observable in late eighteenth-century poetry is the decline of the Romantic pastoralism of the classical Renaissance From *The Shepherds Calender* down to the *Pastorals* of Pope this literary fashion of thought had continued to afford materials to the English poet It was derived from the fiction of a Golden Age of virtue and innocence, traces of which were supposed still to linger in the simplicity of country life A belief so artificial could only thrive in an artificial atmosphere, it was congenial to Courts For a long period 'every flowery courtier writ romance,' and in all that portion of society which pretended to good breeding, each lover thought of himself as a shepherd, and sighed for his mistress as a nymph Slight indications of the fashion are to be found even in poets so plain and unaffected as Cowper and Burns But as wealth accumulated, and the democratic influence of cities extended, it was gradually felt that for a rich and refined society to be always emulating the manners of shepherds was somewhat absurd This feeling found a vigorous exponent in Johnson, whose *Lives of the Poets* abound in expressions of contempt for the insipidity and unreality of pastoral poetry.

Of these conditions of taste Crabbe dexterously availed himself. He saw that the questions which were becoming of paramount interest in men's minds were no longer political but social Himself born and bred among the poor, he knew that there was a vast range of human interest in the actions, passions, and manners of common life, of which the general reader, though they lay immediately under his eyes, was completely ignorant At the same time his knowledge of English literature enabled him to perceive how effective a contrast might be drawn between rural life as it was conventionally described by poets, and as it existed in reality On this principle he designed and executed *The Village* Beginning with a brief but telling allusion to the fiction of the Golden

Age, he proceeded to draw with a stern fidelity the picture of the actual village with its sterile soil, its half starved inhabitants, and its smuggling surroundings; he described the sufferings of the peasant concealed by pride or suppressed by necessity the hopelessness of his prospect, in the workhouse which awaited his old age, and where he could look for no relief for his material and spiritual wants except such as might be afforded by the quack doctor or the fox hunting parson. His apology for such a representation of reality was, he said, the necessity of showing how small was the difference between the different ranks of men when measured by the standard of their common nature. The plea was felt to be just; many whose imaginations had before been satisfied with the dreamland of conventional fancy were induced to extend their sympathies to the drama of actual life. *The Village* speedily became popular.

Yet though Crabbe had thus established for himself a permanent place among the English poets, he seemed in no haste to work further the vein of poetry which he had discovered. After the publication of *The Newspaper*—a somewhat uninteresting composition—he seemed almost to lay aside literary ambition, and twenty two years elapsed before the appearance of *The Parish Register*. This poem is an extension of the subject treated in *The Village*; he takes up again the old text, Auburn and Eden can be found no more, but experience of the world had enlarged his views, and his descriptions of life and character in the *Register* are not so unvaryingly dark as in the earlier poem. To his view of country tempers, manners, morals, customs, arts, he now joined some highly finished episodes of individual life, one of which the story of Phoebe Dawson, is specially memorable as having given pleasure to Fox in his last illness. In his next poem *The Borough*, together with many admirable pictures of that Suffolk coast life and scenery which always exercised a strong spell on his imaginations, he inserted several connected tales, illustrative of the peculiar temptations and passions to which the poor are exposed, and having now discovered his extraordinary power of tracing the working of the human mind, he soon afterwards published twenty one *Tales* of various kinds, tragic, pathetic, and humorous. These were entirely wanting in connection and it was probably a fear that the appearance of a new set of separate stories might expose him to the charge of repeating himself, which caused him to attempt a kind of unity in his last work, *Tales of the Hall*.

In this the stories, though in every other respect resembling the first series, were connected with each other by the persons of the narrators, two brothers, who having been parted since their youth, meet when middle-aged in the house of the elder, and amuse each other with their different experiences

Though Crabbe occupies so marked a place in the history of English poetry, he has not met in our own generation with all the attention which he deserves. Something of this comparative neglect is to be attributed to changes in society, the altered position of the poor has fortunately deprived his poems of much of the reality they once possessed. Something too must be ascribed to the revolutions of taste. We have been long accustomed to look at Nature and peasant life through the philosophic medium created for us by Wordsworth and his followers. From the poetical standpoint of this school Crabbe is as far removed as he is from the conventional pastoralism of his predecessors. His intention is simply to paint things as they are, and modern ideology therefore finds in his poetry an uncongenial atmosphere. But beyond this it must be allowed that of all standard English writers Crabbe makes the largest demands on the patience of his readers. His great defect is an incurable want of taste. Like Rembrandt, to whose work his poetical chiaroscuro has a striking analogy, he seems, while impressing the imagination with powerful effects of light and shade, to delight at the same time in the exhibition of the most vulgar details. These he introduces into his poetry without the slightest attempt at generalisation or selection. In the midst of a passage of sustained tragic pathos he shocks us by the appearance of some incredibly mean thought or word, his shrewd humour runs without restraint into coarseness, and he frequently oversteps the line that divides the horrible from the terrible.

Yet after making full deduction for these defects we have still left a body of powerful and original poetry, and indeed the defects themselves arise from that strong bent of genius which makes Crabbe's verse such an admirable foil to the insincerity of the fashionable pastoral. The extraordinary minuteness of his descriptions of actual nature becomes excusable when we take into consideration the deep moral truth which he seeks to convey in them. As an observer and painter of the individual truths of nature no poet has ever approached him. He had a scientific interest and curiosity about all living objects, and this, though it impaired his sense of beauty, gave him an unrivalled power

In placing the scenes and persons he described before the mind of the reader. Whether he paints a storm on the East Coast, or exhibits the succession of images passing through the imagination of the condemned felon, or shows the mental stages by which the enthusiast of virtue proceeds to crime, everything is represented with an appearance of scientific precision, which in an ordinary poet would be offensive, but which from Crabbe's point of view is just and necessary. At the same time, with all this Dutch minuteness, he possessed, as we see in *The Lover's Journey* and *Delay has Danger*, exceptional skill in describing Nature in the aspect which she presents to minds labouring under strong emotions. His powers of pathos are extraordinary and his faculty of giving pain is often put to an illegitimate use. When his humour is under his control it is admirable, and of all the poets who have used the heroic couplet, Pope himself not excepted, he is the best writer of easy dialogue. As a painter of character he evidently modelled himself on Pope, but the style of the two poets is as different as their genius. Pope, an unequalled observer within a limited compass, is most careful to choose rare types and to embody their prominent features in the most select and pregnant words. Crabbe, on the other hand, trusts to the largeness of his experience, and to the general human interest of his descriptions, and, though preserving the antithetical form of Pope's verse, makes comparatively little attempt at epigrammatic expression. It is noticeable that, as his subjects become more numerous and extended, his care in composition seems to diminish; there is far more literary finish in *The Village* than in *Tales of the Hall*.

W J COURTHOPE.

## THE VILLAGE AS IT IS

[From *The Village*, Book I]

Fled are those times, when in harmonious strains,  
 The rustic poet praised his native plains  
 No shepherds now, in smooth alternate verse,  
 Their country's beauty, or their nymph's rehearse,  
 Yet still for these we frame the tender strain,  
 Still in our lays fond Corydons complain,  
 And shepherds' boys their amorous pains reveal,  
 The only pains, alas ! they never feel

On Mincio's banks, in Cæsar's bounteous reign,  
 If Tityrus found the golden age again,  
 Must sleepy bards the flattering dream prolong,  
 Mechanic echoes of the Mantuan song?  
 From Truth and Nature shall we widely stray,  
 Where Virgil, not where fancy, leads the way?

\* \* \* \* \*

No, cast by fortune on a frowning coast,  
 Which neither groves nor happy valleys boast,  
 Where other cares than those the Muse relates,  
 And other shepherds dwell with other mates,  
 By such examples taught, I paint the cot,  
 As Truth will paint it and as bards will not  
 Nor you, ye poor, of lettered scorn complain,  
 To you the smoothest song is smooth in vain,  
 O'ercome by labour, and bowed down by time,  
 Feel you the barren flattery of a rhyme?  
 Can poets soothe you, when you pine for bread,  
 By winding myrtles round your ruin'd shed?—  
 Can their light tales your weighty griefs o'erpower,  
 Or glad with airy mirth the toilsome hour?  
 Lo ! where the heath, with withering brake grown o'er,  
 Lends the light turf that warms the neighbouring poor.  
 From thence a length of burning sand appears,  
 Where the thin harvest waves its withered ears,

Rank weeds, that every art and care defy  
Reign o'er the land and rob the blighted rye  
There thistles stretch their prickly arms afar,  
And to the ragged infant threaten war;  
There poppies nodding mock the hope of toil  
There the blue bugloss paints the sterile soil;  
Hardy and high, above the slender sheaf,  
The slimy mallow waves her silky leaf;  
O'er the young shoot the charlock throws a shade,  
And clasping tares cling round the sickly blade  
With mingled tints the rocky coasts abound,  
And a sad splendour vainly shines around.

## THE CONVICT'S DREAM.

[From *The Borough* Letter xxiii.]

Yes! even in sleep the impressions all remain,  
He hears the sentence and he feels the chain  
He sees the judge and jury—when he shakes,  
And loudly cries Not guilty! and awakes  
Then chilling tremblings o'er his body creep,  
Till worn-out nature is compelled to sleep

Now comes the dream again it shows each scene  
With each small circumstance that comes between,  
The call to suffering, and the very deed—  
There crowds go with him, follow and precede;  
Some heartless shout, some pity all condemn,  
While he in fancied envy looks at them  
He seems the place for that sad act to see,  
And dreams the very thirst which then will be  
A priest attends—it seems the one he knew  
In his best days, beneath whose care he grew

At this his terrors take a sudden flight,  
He sees his native village with delight  
The home, the chamber where he once arrayed  
His youthful person; where he knelt and prayed:

Then too the comfort he enjoyed at home,  
The days of joy, the joys themselves are come,—  
The hours of innocence, the timid look  
Of his loved maid, when first her hand he took,  
And told his hope; her trembling joy appears,  
Her forced reserve and his retreating fears

All now is present, 'tis a moment's gleam,  
Of former sunshine—stay delightful dream!  
Let them within his pleasant garden walk,  
Give him her arm, of blessings let them talk.

Yes! all are with him now, and all the while  
Life's early prospects and his Fanny's smile  
Then come his sister and his village friend,  
And he will now the sweetest moments spend  
Life has to yield,—No! never will he find  
Again on earth such pleasure in his mind  
He goes through shrubby walks these friends among,  
Love in their looks and honour on the tongue  
Nay, there's a charm beyond what nature shows,  
The bloom is softer and more sweetly glows  
Pierced by no crime and urged by no desire  
For more than true and honest hearts require,  
They feel the calm delight, and thus proceed  
Through the green lane—then linger in the mead,  
Stray o'er the heath in all its purple bloom,  
And pluck the blossoms where the wild bees hum,  
Then through the broomy bound with ease they pass,  
And press the sandy sheep-walk's slender grass,  
Where dwarfish flowers among the gorse are spread,  
And the lamb browses by the linnet's bed,  
Then 'cross the bounding brook they make their way  
O'er its rough bridge—and there behold the bay!  
The ocean smiling to the fervid sun—  
The waves that faintly fall and slowly run—  
The ships at distance and the boats at hand,  
And now they walk upon the seaside sand,  
Counting the number and what kind they be,  
Ships softly sinking in the sleepy sea,  
Now arm in arm, now parted, they behold

The glittering waters on the shingles rolled ;  
The timid girls, half dreading their design,  
Dip the small foot in the retarded brine,  
And search for crimson weeds, which spreading flow  
Or lie like pictures on the sand below ;  
With all those bright red pebbles, that the sun  
Through the small waves so softly shines upon,  
And those live lucid jellies which the eye  
Delights to trace as they swim glittering by  
Pearl shells and rubied star fish they admire,  
And will arrange above the parlour fire—  
Tokens of bliss ! Oh ! horrible ! a wave  
Roars as it rises—Save me, Edward save !  
She cries—Alas ! the watchman on his way  
Calls, and lets in—truth, terror and the day !

## STROLLING PLAYERS.

[From *The Borough*, Letter xii.]

Sad happy race ! Soon raised and soon depressed,  
Your days all passed in jeopardy and jest ;  
Poor without prudence, with afflictions vain,  
Not warned by misery not enriched by gain  
Whom justice, pitying, chides from place to place,  
A wandering careless, wretched, merry race,  
Who cheerful looks assume, and play the parts  
Of happy rovers with repining hearts ;  
Then cast off care, and, in the mimic pain  
Of tragic woe, feel spirits light and vain,  
Distress and hope—the mind's, the body's, wear,  
The man's affliction and the actor's tear  
Alternate times of fasting and excess  
Are yours, ye smiling children of distress.

Slaves though ye be, your wandering freedom seems,  
And with your varying views and restless schemes,  
Your griefs are transient, as your joys are dreams.

## THE FOUNDER OF THE ALMSHOUSE

[From *The Borough*, Letter xiii.]

Leave now our streets, and in yon plain behold  
Those pleasant seats for the reduced and old,  
A merchant's gift, whose wife and children died,  
When he to saving all his powers applied,  
He wore his coat till bare was every thread,  
And with the meanest fare his body fed.  
He had a female cousin, who with care  
Walked in his steps, and learned of him to spare,  
With emulation and success they strove,  
Improving still, still seeking to improve,  
As if that useful knowledge they would gain—  
How little food would human life sustain  
No pauper came their table's crumbs to crave;  
Scraping they lived, but not a scrap they gave:  
When beggars saw the frugal merchant pass,  
It moved their pity and they said 'Alas'  
Hard is thy fate, my brother,' and they felt  
A beggar's pride as they that pity dealt  
The dogs, who learn of man to scorn the poor,  
Barked him away from every decent door,  
While they who saw him bare but thought him rich,  
To show respect or scorn they knew not which

But while our merchant seemed so base and mean,  
He had his wanderings, sometimes not unseen;  
To scenes of various woe he nightly went,  
And serious sums in healing misery spent;  
Oft has he cheered the wretched at a rate  
For which he daily might have dined on plate,  
He has been seen—his hair all silver white,  
Shaking and shivering—as he stole by night,  
To feed unenvied on his still delight.  
A twofold taste he had; to give and spare,  
Both were his duties, and had equal care.

It was his joy to sit at home and fast,  
Then send a widow and her boys repast  
Tears in his eyes would spite of him appear,  
But he from other eyes has kept the tear  
All in a wintry night from far he came  
To soothe the sorrows of a suffering dame  
Whose husband robb'd him, and to whom he meant  
A lingering but reforming punishment  
Home then he walked, and found his anger rise  
When fire and rushlight met his troubled eyes ;  
But these extinguished, and his prayer addressed  
To Heaven in hope, he calmly sank to rest.

#### A STORM ON THE EAST COAST

[From *The Borough* Letter L]

View now the winter storm! above one cloud,  
Black and unbroken, all the skies o'ershroud  
The unwieldy porpoise through the day before  
Had rolled in view of boding men on shore ;  
And sometimes hid and sometimes showed his form,  
Dark as the cloud and furious as the storm.  
All where the eye delights yet dreads to roam,  
The breaking billows cast the flying foam  
Upon the billows rising—all the deep  
Is restless change ; the waves so swelled and steep,  
Breaking and sinking and the sunken swells,  
Nor one, one moment, in its station dwells  
But nearer land you may the billows trace,  
As if contending in their watery chace ;  
May watch the mightiest till the shoal they reach,  
Then break and hurry to their utmost stretch ;  
Curled as they come, they strike with furious force,  
And then, reflowing, take their grating course,  
Raking the rounded flints, which ages past  
Rolled by their rage, and shall to ages last.  
Far off the petrel in the troubled way  
Swims with her brood, or flutters in the spray ;

She rises often, often drops again,  
 And sports at ease on the tempestuous main  
 High o'er the restless deep, above the reach  
 Of gunners' hope, vast flocks of wild-duck stretch,  
 Far as the eye can glance on either side,  
 In a broad space and level line they glide,  
 All in their wedge-like figures from the north  
 Day after day, flight after flight, go forth  
 In-shore their passage tribes of sea-gulls urge,  
 And drop for prey within the sweeping surge,  
 Oft in the rough opposing blast they fly  
 Far back, then turn and all their force apply,  
 While to the storm they give their weak complaining cry,  
 Or clap the sleek white pinion on the breast,  
 And in the restless ocean dip for rest

Darkness begins to reign, the louder wind  
 Appals the weak, and awes the firmer mind,  
 But frights not him whom evening and the spray  
 In part conceal—yon prowler on his way,  
 Lo, he has something seen, he runs apace,  
 As if he fear'd companion in the chase,  
 He sees his prize, and now he turns again,  
 Slowly and sorrowing—'Was your search in vain?'  
 Gruffly he answers, "'Tis a sorry sight!  
 A seaman's body there'll be more to-night!'

### AN ENTANGLEMENT.

[From *Tales of the Hall*]

[The following is an extract from one of the *Tales of the Hall*, entitled 'Delay has Danger' A young man, who is happily engaged to be married, finds himself, during a visit in a friend's house, partly through his own weakness and folly, partly through the cunning designs of others, compromised in his relations with a girl of inferior station and insignificant attractions The dialogue that ensues is between the unwilling lover and the girl's adopted parents, who are upper servants in his host's house, and who, having brought about the entanglement, now affect to encourage the lover in his timid advances]

'An orphan maid—your patience! you shall have  
 Your time to speak, I now attention crave—

Fanny, dear girl! has in my spouse and me  
 Friends of a kind we wish our friends to be,  
 None of the poorest—nay, sir, no reply,  
 You shall not need—and we are born to die;  
 And one yet crawls on earth, of whom, I say  
 That what he has he cannot take away  
 Her mother's father one who has a store  
 Of this world's goods and always looks for more  
 But, next his money loves the girl at heart,  
 And she will have it when they come to part.

'Sir, said the youth, his terrors all awake,  
 'Hear me, I pray, I beg—for mercy's sake!  
 Sir were the secrets of my soul confessed,  
 Would you admit the truths that I protest  
 Are such—your pardon—'

'Pardon! good my friend,  
 I not alone will pardon, I commend;  
 Think you that I have no remembrance left  
 Of youthful love and Cupid's cunning theft?  
 How nymphs will listen when their swains persuade,  
 How hearts are gained and how exchange is made?  
 Come, sir your hand—

'In mercy hear me now!  
 'I cannot hear you, time will not allow  
 You know my station, what on me depends,  
 For ever needed—but we part as friends;  
 And here comes one who will the whole explain,  
 My better self—and we shall meet again  
 'Sir I entreat—

'Then be entreaty made  
 To her a woman, one you may persuade;  
 A little teasing, but she will comply  
 And loves her niece too fondly to deny  
 'O! he is mad, and miserable I!  
 Exclaimed the youth; but let me now collect  
 My scatter'd thoughts; I something must effect.  
 Hurrying she came—'Now what has he confessed,  
 Ere I could come to set your heart at rest?  
 What! he has grieved you! Yet he too approves

The thing ! but man will tease you, if he loves  
 But now for business tell me, did you think  
 That we should always at your meetings wink ?  
 Think you, you walked unseen ? There are who bring  
 To me all secrets—O you wicked thing !  
 Poor Fanny ! now I think I see her blush,  
 All red and rosy, when I beat the bush ,  
 And “ Hide your secret,”—said I, “ if you dare ! ”  
 So out it came like an affrightened hare  
 “ Miss ! ” said I, gravely and the trembling maid  
 Pleased me at heart to see her so afraid ,  
 And then she wept,—now, do remember this,  
 Never to chide her when she does amiss ,  
 For she is tender as the callow bird,  
 And cannot bear to have her temper stirred ,—  
 “ Fanny,” I said, then whispered her the name,  
 And caused such looks—yes, yours are just the same ,  
 But hear my story—When your love was known  
 For this our child—she is in fact our own—  
 Then, first debating, we agreed at last  
 To seek my Lord and tell him what had passed.  
 ‘ To tell the Earl ? ’

‘ Yes truly, and why not ?  
 And then together we contrived our plot ’  
 ‘ Eternal God ! ’

‘ Nay be not so surprised,—  
 In all the matter we were well advised ,  
 We saw my Lord, and Lady Jane was there  
 And said to Johnson—‘ Johnson, take a chair ’  
 True we are servants in a certain way,  
 But in the higher places so are they ,  
 We are obeyed in ours and they in theirs obey—  
 So Johnson bowed, for that was right and fit,  
 And had no scruple with the Earl to sit—  
 Why look you so impatient while I tell  
 What they debated ? You must like it well.’

\* \* \* \* \*

That evening all in fond discourse was spent  
 When the sad lover to his chamber went,

To think on what had passed, to grieve and to repent.  
Early he rose, and looked with many a sigh  
On the red light that filled the eastern sky ;  
Oft had he stood before, alert and gay,  
To hail the glories of the new born day ;  
But now dejected, languid, listless, low,  
He saw the wind upon the water blow  
And the cold stream curled onward as the gale  
From the pine hill blew harshly down the dale ;  
On the right side the youth a wood surveyed  
With all its dark intensity of shade  
Where the rough wind alone was heard to move,  
In this, the pause of nature and of love,  
When now the young are reared, and when the old,  
Lost to the tie grow negligent and cold—  
Far to the left he saw the huts of men,  
Half hid in mist, that hung upon the fen ;  
Before him swallows gathering for the sea,  
Took their short flights and twittered on the lea ;  
And near the bean sheaf stood, the harvest done,  
And slowly blackened in the sickly sun  
All these were sad in nature, or they took  
Sadness from time, the likeness of his look,  
And of his mind—he pondered for a while,  
Then met his Fanny with a borrowed smile

## WILLIAM BLAKE.

[WILLIAM BLAKE was born in London, at No 28, Broad Street, Golden Square, on the 28th November 1757, he died in Fountain Court, Strand, on the 12th of August, 1827 His *Poetical Sketches* were published in 1783, and the *Songs of Innocence* in 1787 In 1787 was also published *The Book of Thel*, and this was followed in 1790 by *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, in 1791 by *The French Revolution*, and in 1793 by *The Gates of Paradise*, the *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*, and the *America* The *Songs of Experience*, designed as a companion series to the earlier *Songs of Innocence*, were issued in 1794 Of the later productions of the poet nearly all belonged to the class of prophetic books To the year 1794 belong the *Europe* and *The Book of Urizen*, in 1795 appeared *The Song of Los* and *The Book of Abania*, and in 1804 the *Jerusalem* and the *Milton* ]

The poetry of Blake holds a unique position in the history of English literature Its extraordinary independence of contemporary fashion in verse, and its intuitive sympathy with the taste of a later generation, would alone suffice to give a peculiar interest to the study of the poet's career Nor is this interest in any way diminished by a knowledge of Blake's singular and strongly marked individuality Indeed, it is scarcely possible to do justice to the great qualities of his imagination, or to make due allowance for its startling defects, unless the exercise of the poetic gift is considered in relation to the other faculties of his mind He appealed to the world in the double capacity of poet and painter, and such was the peculiar nature of his endowment and the particular method of his work, that it is difficult to measure the value of his literary genius without some reference to his achievements in design For it is not merely that he practised the two arts simultaneously, but that he chose to combine them after a fashion of his own An engraver by profession and training, he began at a very early age to employ his technical knowledge in the invention of a wholly original system of literary publication. With the exception of the *Poetical Sketches*, issued in the ordinary form through the kindly help of friends, nearly all of Blake's poems

were given to the world in a fantastic dress of his own devising. He became in a special sense his own printer and his own publisher. The typography of his poems and the pictorial illustration by which they were accompanied were blended in a single scheme of ornamental design, and from the engraved plate upon which this design was executed by the artist's own hand copies were struck off in numbers more than sufficient to satisfy the modest demands of his admirers.

This peculiar process of publication cannot of course be held to affect Blake's claims as a poet. It bears a more obvious relation to those powers of a purely artistic kind which are not here in question but its employment by him is nevertheless well deserving of remark in this place, because it indicates a certain quality of mind that deeply affected his poetic individuality. That happy mingling and confusion of text and ornament which give such a charm to *Songs of Innocence* was the symbol of a strongly marked intellectual tendency that afterwards received a morbid development. Blake has been called mad, and within certain well-defined limits the charge must, we think, be admitted. He possessed only in the most imperfect and rudimentary form the faculty which distinguishes the functions of art and literature and when his imagination was exercised upon any but the simplest material, his logical powers became altogether unequal to the labour of logical and consequent expression. That this failure arose rather from morbid excess and excitement of visionary power than from any abnormal defect of intellectual energy is sufficiently indicated by the facts of his career. For while his hold over the abstract symbols of language grew gradually feebler his powers of pictorial imagery became correspondingly vigorous and intense. The artistic faculty in Blake strengthened and developed with advancing life, and he produced no surer or more satisfying example of his powers than the series of illustrations to the Book of Job, executed when he was already an old man.

Indeed if Blake had never committed himself to literature we should scarcely be aware of the morbid tendency of his mind. It is only in turning from his design to his verse that we are forced to recognise the imperfect balance of his faculties nor could we rightly understand the strange limitation of his poetical powers without constant reference to this diseased activity of the artistic sense. For there is a large portion of Blake's verse which is not infected at all with the suspicion of insanity and it seems at first

sight almost inexplicable that a writer who has produced some of the simplest and sweetest lyrics in the language should also have left behind him a confused mass of writings such as no man can hope to decipher. All that can be done for these so-called *Prophetic Books* has been accomplished by Mr Swinburne, in his sympathetic study of the poet's work, but although Mr Swinburne rightly asserts the power that is displayed in them, his eloquent commentary does not substantially change the ordinary judgment of their confused and inconsequent character. The defects of such work are too grave for any kind of serious vindication to be really possible, and if Blake had produced nothing more or nothing better, his claims to rank among English poets could not be successfully maintained. But these defects, although they are in their nature incurable, are not altogether incapable of explanation. For it cannot be questioned by any one who has seriously attempted to decipher these 'prophetic' writings, that to Blake himself the ordinary modes of intellectual expression had become charged with something of mysterious and special meaning. Words were no longer mere abstract symbols: they had assumed to his imagination the force of individual images. As they passed into his work they lost the stamp of ordinary currency and became impressed with a device of his own coinage, vivid and eloquent to him, but strange to all the world beside. To Blake's mind, in short, these prophetic writings doubtless formed a series of distinct and coherent pictures, but without the key that he alone possessed, they must ever remain a chaos through which not even the most wary guide can hope to find a path.

Putting aside the prophetic books, the quantity of verse which Blake has left behind him is by no means large. His lyrical poems have been collected in a small volume edited by Mr W M Rossetti, and the contents of this volume are found to be mainly derived from the *Poetical Sketches* and the *Songs of Innocence and Experience*. It is to these essays of his youth and early manhood that we must look for the true sources of his fame. The *Poetical Sketches*, begun when the author was only twelve years of age, and finished when he was no more than twenty, must assuredly be reckoned among the most extraordinary examples of youthful production, and it is profoundly characteristic of the man and his particular cast of mind that many of these boyish poems are among the best that Blake at any time produced. For his was a nature that owed little to development or experience. The perfect

innocence of his spirit, as it kept him safe from the taint of the world, also rendered him incapable of receiving that enlargement of sympathy and deepening of emotion which others differently constituted may gain from contact with actual life. His imagination was not of the kind that could deal with the complex problems of human passion; he retained to the end of his days the happy ignorance as well as the freshness of childhood and it is therefore perhaps less wonderful in his case than it would be in the case of a poet of richer and more varied humanity that he should be able to display at once and in early youth the full measure of his powers.

But this acknowledgment of the inherent limitation of Blake's poetic gift leads us by a natural process to a clearer recognition of its great qualities. His detachment from the ordinary currents of practical thought left to his mind an unspoiled and delightful simplicity which has perhaps never been matched in English poetry. The childlike beauty of his poems is entirely free from the awkward lisp of wisdom that condescends. It is always unconscious and always unstrained, and even the simplicity of a poet like Wordsworth must often seem by comparison to be tinged with a didactic spirit. Blake's verse has indeed, both as regards intellectual invention and executive skill, a kind of unpremeditated charm that forces comparison with the things of inanimate life. Where he is successful his work has the fresh perfume and perfect grace of a flower and at all times there is the air of careless growth that belongs to the shapes of outward nature. And yet this quality of simplicity is constantly associated with an unusual power of rendering the most subtle effects of beauty. In the actual processes of his art Blake could command the utmost refinement and delicacy of style. He possessed in a rare degree the secret by which the loveliness of a scene can be arrested and registered in a line of verse, and he often displays a faultless choice of language and the finest sense of poetic melody.

We have said already that he worked in absolute independence of the accepted models of his time. This is strictly true but it would be absurd therefore to assume that he laboured without any models at all. Blake's isolation, if we look to the character of the man, is indeed less extraordinary than it would otherwise appear. He did not mingle in the concerns of life in such a way as to expose him to the dangers of being unduly swayed by the caprices of fashion. His was a world of his own creating and to his vivid

imagination the poets of an earlier generation would seem as near as the versifiers of his own day. That he should have chosen from the past those models whose example was most needed in order to infuse a new life into English poetry proves of course the justice of his poetic instinct. In fixing upon the great writers of the Elizabethan age he anticipated, as we have already observed, the taste of a succeeding generation, and it is only to be regretted that he did not absolutely confine himself to these nobler models of style. Unfortunately however his own intellectual tendency towards mysticism, found only too ready encouragement in the prophetic vagueness of the Ossianic verse, and we may fairly trace a part at least of Blake's obscurer manner to this source.

J COMYNS CARR

[From *Poetical Sketches*]

TO THE EVENING STAR.

Thou fair haired Angel of the Evening,  
Now whilst the sun rests on the mountains, light  
Thy bright torch of love—thy radiant crown  
Put on, and smile upon our evening bed!  
Smile on our loves and while thou drawest the  
Blue curtains of the sky scatter thy silver dew  
On every flower that shuts its sweet eyes  
In timely sleep. Let thy West Wind sleep on  
The lake speak silence with thy glimmering eyes  
And wash the dusk with silver—Soon, full soon,  
Dost thou withdraw then the wolf rages wide,  
And the lion glares through the dun forest,  
The fleeces of our flocks are covered with  
Thy sacred dew protect them with thine influence!

SONG.

How sweet I roamed from field to field,  
And tasted all the summer's pride  
Till I the Prince of Love beheld,  
Who in the sunny beams did glide.  
He showed me lilies for my hair  
And blushing roses for my brow  
And led me through his gardens fair  
Where all his golden pleasures grow  
With sweet May-dews my wings were wet,  
And Phoebus fired my vocal rage;  
He caught me in his silken net,  
And shut me in his golden cage.  
He loves to sit and hear me sing,  
Then laughing sports and plays with me,  
Then stretches out my golden wing,  
And mocks my loss of liberty

## SONG

My silks and fine array,  
My smiles and languished air,  
By love are driven away,  
And mournful lean Despair  
Brings me yew to deck my grave  
Such end true lovers have

His face is fair as heaven  
When springing buds unfold ;  
Oh, why to him was't given  
Whose heart is wintry cold ?  
His breast is love's all-worshipped tomb  
Where all love's pilgrims come.

Bring me an axe and spade,  
Bring me a winding sheet ,  
When I my grave have made,  
Let winds and tempest beat ,  
Then down I'll lie as cold as clay  
True love doth pass away!

## SONG

Memory, hither come  
And tune your merry notes ;  
And while upon the wind  
Your music floats,  
I'll pore upon the stream  
Where sighing lovers dream,  
And fish for fancies as they pass  
Within the watery glass.

I'll drink of the clear stream,  
And hear the linnet's song,  
And there I'll lie and dream  
The day along  
And when night comes I'll go  
To places fit for woe,  
Walking along the darkened valley  
With silent Melancholy

## MAD SONG.

The wild winds weep,  
And the night is a-cold,  
Come hither Sleep,  
And my griefs enfold  
But lo! the morning peeps  
Over the eastern steeps,  
And the rustling beds of dawn  
The earth do scorn.

Lo! to the vault  
Of paved heaven  
With sorrow fraught  
My notes are driven;  
They strike the ear of night,  
Make weak the eyes of day;  
They make mad the roaring winds  
And with tempests play

Like a fiend in a cloud  
With howling woe  
After night I do crowd  
And with night will go;  
I turn my back to the east  
From whence comforts have increased;  
For light doth seize my brain  
With frantic pain.

## TO THE MUSES

Whether on Ida's shady brow,  
 Or in the chambers of the East,  
 The chambers of the Sun that now  
 From ancient melody have ceased ,  
 Whether in Heaven ye wander fair,  
 Or the green corners of the Earth,  
 Or the blue regions of the air,  
 Where the melodious winds have birth ,  
 Whether on crystal rocks ye rove  
 Beneath the bosom of the sea,  
 Wandering in many a coral grove ,  
 Fair Nine, forsaking Poetry  
 How have you left your ancient love  
 That bards of old enjoyed in you '  
 The languid strings do scarcely move,  
 The sound is forced, the notes are few

[From *Songs of Innocence* ]

## INTRODUCTION

Piping down the valleys wild,  
 Piping songs of pleasant glee,  
 On a cloud I saw a child,  
 And he laughing said to me —  
 'Pipe a song about a lamb '   
 So I piped with merry cheer  
 'Piper, pipe that song again '   
 So I piped , he wept to hear  
 'Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe,  
 Sing thy songs of happy cheer '   
 So I sung the same again,  
 While he wept with joy to hear.

'Piper sit thee down and write  
 In a book that all may read'—  
 So he vanished from my sight ;  
 And I plucked a hollow reed,  
 And I made a rural pen,  
 And I stained the water clear  
 And I wrote my happy songs,  
 Every child may joy to hear

## THE LAMB.

Little lamb, who made thee?  
 Dost thou know who made thee  
 Gave thee life and bade thee feed  
 By the stream and over the mead ;  
 Gave thee clothing of delight,  
 Softest clothing woolly bright ;  
 Gave thee such a tender voice,  
 Making all the vales rejoice?  
     Little lamb, who made thee?  
     Dost thou know who made thee?

Little lamb I'll tell thee ;  
 Little lamb I'll tell thee.  
 He is called by thy name,  
 For He calls himself a Lamb ;  
 He is meek and He is mild,  
 He became a little child.  
 I a child and thou a lamb,  
 We are called by His name.  
     Little lamb, God bless thee !  
     Little lamb, God bless thee !

## NIGHT

The sun descending in the west,  
 The evening star does shine  
 The birds are silent in their nest,  
 And I must seek for mine.

The moon, like a flower  
In heaven's high bower,  
With silent delight  
Sits and smiles on the night

Farewell, green fields and happy grove,  
Where flocks have ta'en delight,  
Where lambs have nibbled, silent move  
The feet of angels bright  
Unseen they pour blessing,  
And joy without ceasing,  
On each bud and blossom,  
On each sleeping bosom

They look in every thoughtless nest,  
Where birds are covered warm,  
They visit caves of every beast,  
To keep them all from harm.  
If they see any weeping  
That should have been sleeping,  
They pour sleep on their head,  
And sit down by their bed.

When wolves and tigers howl for prey  
They pitying stand and weep,  
Seeking to drive their thirst away,  
And keep them from the sheep  
But if they rush dreadful  
The angels most heedful  
Receive each mild spirit  
New worlds to inherit.

And there the lion's ruddy eyes  
Shall flow with tears of gold  
And pitying the tender cries,  
And walking round the fold,  
Saying 'Wrath by His meekness,  
And by His health sickness,  
Are driven away  
From our immortal day

And now beside thee, bleating lamb,  
I can lie down and sleep,  
Or think on Him who bore thy name,  
Graze after thee, and weep.  
For, washed in life's river  
My bright mane for ever  
Shall shine like the gold  
As I guard o'er the fold.'

[From *Songs of Experience*.]

#### AH, SUNFLOWER.

Ah, Sunflower weary of time,  
Who countest the steps of the sun,  
Seeking after that sweet golden clime  
Where the traveller's journey is done—  
Where the youth pined away with desire,  
And the pale virgin, shrouded in snow  
Arise from their graves, and aspire  
Where my sunflower wishes to go!

#### THE TIGER.

Tiger tiger, burning bright  
In the forests of the night,  
What immortal hand or eye  
Could frame thy fearful symmetry:  
In what distant deeps or skies  
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?  
On what wings dare he aspire?  
What the hand dare seize the fire?  
And what shoulder, and what art,  
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?  
And when thy heart began to beat,  
What dread hand? and what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?  
In what furnace was thy brain?  
What the anvil? What dread grasp  
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,  
And watered heaven with their tears,  
Did He smile His work to see?  
Did He who made the lamb, make thee?

Tiger, tiger, burning bright  
In the forests of the night,  
What immortal hand or eye  
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

#### THE ANGEL

I dreamt a dream ! What can it mean?  
And that I was a maiden queen,  
Guarded by an angel mild ,  
Witless woe was ne'er beguiled.

And I wept both night and day,  
And he wiped my tears away ,  
And I wept both day and night,  
And hid from him my heart's delight.

So he took his wings and fled ,  
Then the morn blushed rosy red ,  
I dried my tears and armed my fears  
With ten thousand shields and spears.

Soon my angel came again  
I was armed, he came in vain ;  
For the time of youth was fled,  
And grey hairs were on my head.

